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F O R T Y

86/17

SERMONS

BY THE

Right Reverend

Father in GOD,

RALPH BROWN RIG,

L A T E

L O R D B I S H O P

O F

E X E T E R.

Published by



WILLIAM MARTYN, M. A.

Sometimes Preacher at the Rolls.

The First Volume. *and Second.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by R. Everingham at the Seven Stars in
Ave-Mary-Lane. MDC LXXXV.




*So here a Prelate, in whom Light, & Heate
Learning & Zeale, Meeknesse, & Courage met.
In Gods cause, & y^e Kings, our Brownrige was
A Boanerges, though a Barnabas*

W. Faithorne sculp.

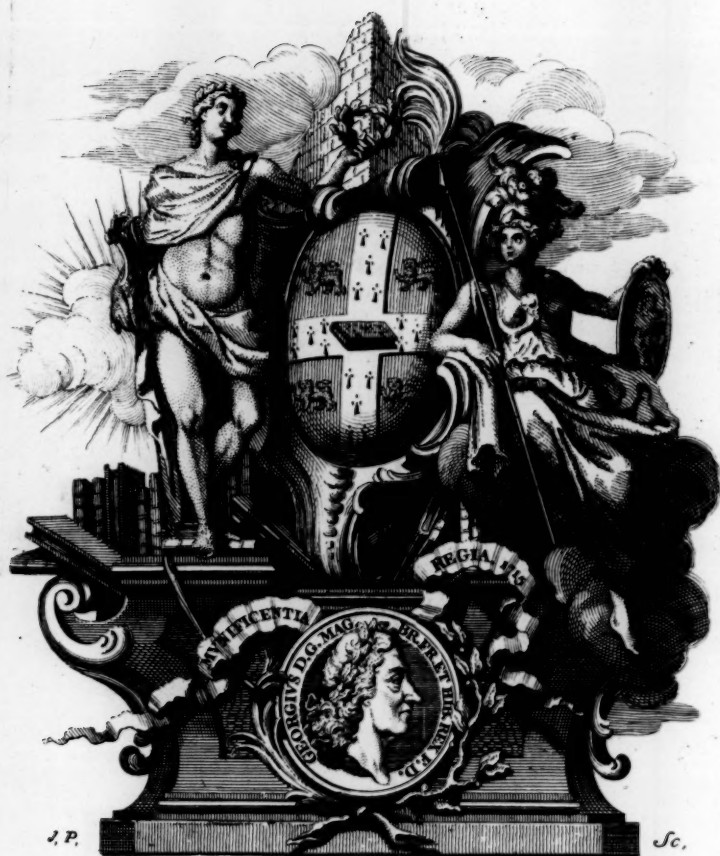
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To His Most Sacred Majesty,
CHARLES II.

By the Grace of God,
King of Great Brittain, France, and Ireland,
Defender of the Faith.

Most Gracious, and Dread Sovereign,



E read in the Book of Samuel, that the Sons of Belial brought no Presents to the King. That I may not be thought to be one of that accursed crue, I here present to your Sacred Majesty (though not so soon as I desired) the Sword of Goliah; which I found wrapped up in a cloth, I mean in those Sheets of Paper, which that incomparable Prelate RALPH BROWNRIG, late Lord Bishop of Exeter, left to me, when he left the world.

As the man was, so was his strength. With it You may see him cutting off the heads of the uncircumcised Philistines, all Regicides and Violators of Kingly Majesty; forcing out of their hands those dreadful Spears of Excommunication, and Deposition, whereby those Sons of Anak have, under several pretensions, endeavoured to tilt off the Crown from the Imperial Heads of Sovereign Kings and Princes; so to tumble them and their honours into the dust of either Papal Usurpation; or Popular Confusion.

If Your Sacred Majesty shall be pleased to make use of the same mighty Sword, You will find it to be Rhomphæam bis acutam, double-edg'd, and such, as whereby You may prove truly victorious, nay, more than Conquerour over the most malignant Enemies, and Enviars of Your Peace and Salvation, even the great Goliah of Hell, and all his adherents. Of such unresistable power is the word of God, when dispensed by skilful and faithful Preachers; by Preachers, who (besides their general, Ministerial sufficiencies) are sanctified by an experimental insight into the great Mystery of godliness, and well-Schooled in the secret passages and practice, of that high and supernatural Science of saving Souls.

These, these, are the only Angels upon Earth, the Embassadors of God, His publick Agents in the Church about the Affairs of Heaven, and Salvation of men. Yea, and these, under God, will be the chief strength of Your Majesties Kingdoms; however they may
be

The Epistle Dedicatory.

be made the ordinary and eminent Objects, whereon Prophaneness and Policy, Sacrilege and Superstition, Hatred to be reformed, and Romish Conformity, will execute the extremity of their rage and passion.

These are the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof; as Joash, King of Israel, acknowledged Elisha to be. These were they, that strengthened the Kingdom of Judah, and made Rehobam strong three years. When Jehoshaphat had taken special and particular care, that there might be such preaching Ministers in all the Congregations within His Dominions, and had sent his Princes and Nobles to countenance and encourage them in their Ministerial employments, 'tis said, that Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly.

So shall Your Sacred Majesty, in despite of God's, this Church's, and Your enemies, like David, wax stronger and stronger: They, like Saul, shall wax weaker and weaker; while You become at once both Charles le Bon, and Charles le Grand; which was the Completion, or Summary of Your Royal Father's wish, who was (while he lived) the Diamond in the Ring of all the Princes in the World. Yea, and You shall approve Your self to be a Nursing Father indeed, if You shall (as You have most graciously begun) go on to promote into Episcopal and Parochial Charges, men enabled for powerful and practical Preaching, eloquently Learned, and loyally Religious.

The Souls of Your People throughout Your Kingdoms, will bless Your Majesty here and hereafter, for Your Pious and Princely care in this particular; and God himself (whose Vice-Roy You are) will mercifully own it, as a Real Testification of that gratitude, which is due from Your Majesty to that Almighty King of Glory for those astonishing successions of unparrall'd deliverances, which His Everlasting Arms reached out unto You, when You were in the depth and desperation of Dangers.

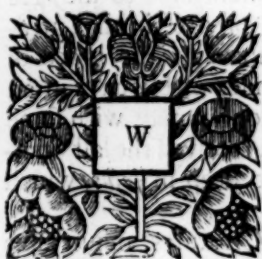
My Lord, O King! You have the Honour (and that most deservedly) to be stiled A merciful King; and I shall in particular proclaim You to be so, if You shall graciously hold out Your Royal Scepter, that I may touch the top of it, and so receive a full assurance, that You freely and fully pardon this bold Address of

Your Majesty's most

Loyal Subject,

WILLIAM MARTYN.

TO THE READERS.



H O the *Author* of these *Sermons* was, you are not now to learn: But this you are to be informed of, that once His Lordship never intended they should be made thus publick. He infinitely disliked the bold and ambitious Humor of such, as can speak nothing in the *Pulpit*, but presently they must with it to the *Press*. Yet His Lordship having freely, and of his own accord, promised His Papers to me, I obtained of Him, by variety and iteration of strong importunity, leave to send some of them abroad into the World. And, I think, 'tis very well, that now they are so, that the World may know, that pious practical Preaching, and Prelatical Dignity are not inconsistent. Yea such, and so extraordinary were His Ministerial sufficiencies, as that I dare adventure to challenge all comers, and let them tell, if they can, where those *Sermons* are to be found, in these last vapouring and perillous times, that they can every way parallel these of this most accomplished *Bishop*.

Peruse them thoroughly, and you will find them to be woven out of a feeling, full, and fluent Soul, by the strength of *Meditation*, supported and sinew'd by the true, natural, and necessary sense of the Word of life, managed with the mighty and incomparable Eloquence of the *Scriptures*, enforc'd with the evidence and power of an holy and humble Heart, a wise and a warm Spirit. And to a good *Christian*, that truly relisheth spiritual things, one such Sermon is more than a world of Declamatory Discourses, which are work only of memory and reading, not composition (as is commonly conceived) of true and judicious *Learning*, solid and saving *Divinity*.

I shall forbear to say any thing of this mighty Prelate; or to tell you, He was one of the greatest Lights that ever the Church of *England* enjoyed, both for soundness of *Learning*, sincerity of *Judgment*, and insight into the *Mysteries* of *Christ*; but shall refer you to that Character that hath been given Him, by His Lordship's Right Reverend, and worthy Successour, *John*, now Lord Bishop of *Exeter*, in that *Funeral Oration*, which he hath presented to the World, as the first Monument of Bishop *Brownrig*, who died in an Age least worthy of his Life, though it much needed him.

And yet, methinks, I cannot hold; but must say four words, and I have done.

One is this; Such was the high Esteem, that this eminently Wise, Learned, Pious *Bishop* had of our English Liturgy, that His Lordship earnestly professed to me, more than once, that it could not be expected to see *Religion* prosper and flourish again amongst us, till that excellent *Book*, so full of holy and humble Prayers, were (as to the substance of it) re-established, and the use of it enjoyed in all Churches within his Majesties Dominions.

Another shall be this; So great was his care to keep himself close to the Texts His Lordship preach'd upon, that, in the composition of His Sermons, His Study and Endeavour was to bring Matter out of the Text (they were His own words) and not Matter to the Text, as is the manner of too many of the great and popular *Sermocinatours* of these loose Times. And this (among other Excellencies conspicuous in His Lordship's Sermons) gained that general acceptation they met with every where from the most pious and judicious Auditors.

A third Word, let be this; In the execution of His Ministry (to use His Lordship's

To the Reader.

ship's own expression) He was not wont to shoot over the Heads of His Hearers, nor yet to hit them full in the Eyes: but his main desire, and endeavour was, if it were possible, to reach their Hearts. Wherein His Lordship manifested much spiritual Wisdom, and holy Discretion; and withal, the sincere and earnest longing he had to work Remorse, and Meditations of Repentance and Return, upon mislead and sensual Souls, and fairly to woo disaffected Passions unto the Love and Pleasures of the ways of God.

I have but one *Word* more, and 'tis this; Such were His Lordship's serious preparations for Death, that three years before (among other secret passages, concerning the state of his own Soul, which he readily communicated to me) He was pleased in private to tell me, that He had made a good progress in that greatest and most important work; and that in a short time (through the grace of God) He should finish it, and so would spend the remainder of His days in an humble and hourly expectancy of his *Dissolution*. Whereupon we may with some confidence speak it, His Lordship had nothing to do, when he received the last Summons to remove from hence, but only to compose Himself to sleep in *Jesus*, which His Lordship did most sweetly and contentedly.

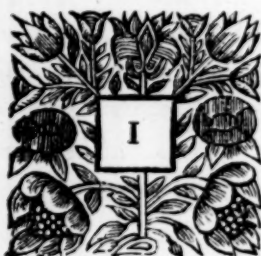
O righteous Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth! We poor Creatures, might have thought, if it had stood with Thy most Holy Will and Pleasure, that it had been much better for thy poor distracted Church (especially in that juncture of time) if his Life had been spared, and preserved with the loss of many of ours: But Thy will was otherwise; to which, as best, we humbly submit.

O, that the Church of God may never want such a *Reverend Father*, such a *wise Governour*, such a *mighty Defender* of the Truth of our *Protestant Religion*, and the pure *Articles* thereof; such a *powerful Preacher*! This shall be my great request to Him, who is the *great Bishop of our Souls*. And, I hope, there are yet many thousands that will join in this petition with him, who is the most unworthy of all, that ever served at the Altar,

WILLIAM MARTYN.

T O H I S
R E V E R E N D F R I E N D
Mr. M A R T Y N.

Reverend Sir,



Should not have taken that freedom with your Papers, if you had not given me your friendly encouragement ; or if I had not as much confidence of your Ingenuity, as I have commendation of your Industry, in applying your self, with so much pious improbity, to those pains, which were necessary to the mature and meet production of those excellent Sermons ; which being first devoted to the service of the King of Kings, are indeed worthy to be presented to the Majesty of the most renowned King under Heaven : being the precious Remains of that incomparable Bishop, my immediate, much admired, and justly emulated Predecessor ; who was blessed with the wit and wisdom, the fulness and freedom of true Eloquence ; not popular and Professorian, but grave and generous ; where neither excellent Subjects, nor suitable Expressions were wanting.

As I ever admir'd His Lordship's happiness, who enjoyed (uberrimi ingenii beatissimam facundiam) a clear Mind, and a ready Tongue ; so I cannot but gratulate your Honour, in being an instrument fitted by Providence, and specially designed by the wise and venerable Author, to bring forth this divine Work with such discreet diligence, as it deserves : That, while it blesteth the World with rare Jewels, these may be set off with all the advantages, which may make them most welcome ; especially since they are capable to put us all, both Bishops and Presbyters, to the blush, whoever pretend to preach most, and best : (O, how ill will those evil and envious Eyes bear them, who either neglect or disdain that Apostolical Duty of Preaching, where God calls and enables to the Duty!) However this benefit we may all reap by our just abashment, that we shall henceforth enjoy so noble Patterns for our future imitation and improvement : where, seeing our Defects in His holy Excesses, we may amend our selves without any diminution to His Perfections ; receiving Light from that which dazleth us, and Lustre from that which eclipseth us.

I heartily wish, That the dew of Heaven may always fall upon these holy
a *Reliques,*

Reliques, That such a spirit may attend the Reader which did the Speaker (which was at once weighty and warm, profound and pathetick, full of potent Demonstrations, and pregnant perswasions.) That while they are seriously perused, they may be fully digested by the unfeigned Belief, humble Obedience, and fervent Love of those holy Truths, those pious and ponderous Instructions, which shine in them with such a pleasurable profit, of learned Zeal and eloquent Devotion; that, I confess, never any Sermons, ancient or modern, more affected me, both hearing and reading, with all variety of Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual Contentments. To me St. Chrysostom and Chrysologus, Sr. Basil the Great, and Gregory of Nazianzum, seemed to be revived in this one, acute, elegant, and Heroick Preacher: the richness of whose Vein, still posed the attentive Hearer, as now the Reader, to consider whether his Invention or Judgment, His Elocution or Devotion, His Solidity or Sanctity, were most to be admired in His Preaching or His Writings, who ever chose excellent Texts, and so handled them: only his grave and goodly Presence gave a greater Majesty, Life, and Emphasis to his Speech and Matter, than can be represented by any dead Letters or Characters.)

O Happy Church of England! beyond the envy or obloquy of Superstitious Romanists, Presbyterian Acephalists, and Independent Fanaticks, if it might be ever bless'd with such Bishops; whose real accomplishments overmatched the first in their Learning, the second in their Preaching, the third in their severest Sanctity. However they might exceed Him in sinister Policies, Semblances, and Subtilties; yet, as to real sufficiencies, none of them was so presumptuous, as to be his Rival; no, not in their own Fancies. So much did morose Non-Conformity, and Anti-Episcopal fury (the first in its more sober; the later in it's Bacchinal, or Frantick Dress) dread to appear in the presence, or enter the Lists with this mighty Man; than whom, no man better distinguished between true Religion, adorn'd with orderly decency; and pompous Superstition, loaden with empty formality; between Ceremonies, fondly swelled to the substance, or Diseases of Religion; and modesty waiting upon it, as comely shadows; inseparable, as our Skins in their common nature; yet variable, as our Cloaths in their particular Fashions and Distinctions.

This learned, judicious, and godly Prelate, owned God alone, as the sole Law-giver, and appointer of the substance of his own Way, and of our Duty: what either might savingly instruct the Mind, or Morally move the Will, or necessarily bind the Conscience; God alone knowing what will best please Himself and most profit us. Hence no man was a greater Vindicatour and Veneratour of the Holy Scriptures, against Romish Innovations, and Fanatick Delusions in Opinion and Practice; which were either contrary to the Tenour of the Scripture-Rules, or deviating from the Catholick Custom of the Church of Christ, consonant thereunto.

On the other side, no man more asserted the Prudence, Liberty, and Authority of this (as all Churches) within their respective Polities and Communions, to chuse and use, yea, to prescribe and impose upon themselves, by publick consent, such particular Forms and Modes of external Solemnity, Order, Reverence, and Decency, as he believed was allowed them by the Word of God; and no less certainly, in Publick Worship, left to the publick Wisdom, and Sovereign Power in Church and State; than is in private Closets and Families, permitted to every single Person, or domestick Governour, to whose discretion Time, and Place, Manner, Measure, Vesture, Gesture, and the like outward modifications of Duties are left by the Indulgence of God, under that general Direction, Let all things be done decently and in order; without any precise command, limiting or enjoyning, all or any Churches, in those Circumstantials, and Ceremonials of Religion: Provided they agree with common Civility, and Christian Charity; neither against Faith, nor Holiness. He thought Ceremonies to be only as the garnish of the Dish; neither the Meat, or the Sauce of Religion.

Not, that this wise and learned Bishop (with whom I have oft discoursed about these things) did think, that the Liberty and Authority of the Church had any power, by its determination, as to any particular use, and uniformity of these Circumstances and Ceremonies, in the publick and solemn exercise of Religion, to change the nature of them, or to impose them as holy, necessary, and immutable, upon the Judgments, Consciences, and Practice of Christian People, as by any intrinsical antecedent, or divine necessity in them; which were a falsity and delusion not to be imposed on the minds of people, and consequently both the imposition, and use, or practise of them, under that notion, would be erroneous, superstitious, and irreligious; But the Church fully and freely declaring (as the Reformed Church of England hath oft done) according to Truth and Charity, it's esteem of the nature and use of such things; First, as free in themselves; Secondly, as no essentials of Worship, or necessary Ingredients to the service of God, by any Divine Command; Thirdly, as no way mysterious or religious, by any significancy, as importing or conferring special Grace (which nothing of outward Sign can properly signify, imply, or convey; unless it hath a Divine Precept and Promise; God only instituting the means or signs, who can give the Grace.) Fourthly, as left at large by God to the prudence of every Church to choose, and use them, as it sees most expedient; signifying and importing nothing more in their use and injunction, than the divine indulgence to Christians beyond the Jews, in point of Ceremonial exactness, and so the Churches Liberty and Authority in these things; and, Lastly, the Duty of every particular Christian, according to their Relations and obligations to several Churches, not to change their Minds, as to the Nature of such things; but yet humbly to be subject, and actually to obey their Superiours in these things for the Lord's sake; according to that Humility, Charity, and

a 2

Peaceableness

Peaceableness which consists with true Wisdom and Holiness, and which is by God required of every Member in those holy Bodies. The nature then of these things He judged still (as it truly is) free, in point of any necessity, having no Divine Injunction: But the use of them he thought no longer free, during the Church's choice, consent and command; whereto our peaceable Obedience and orderly subjection in such things, is founded upon both right Reason and the general Rules of Religion in God's Word, as to the outward Order, Polity, Peaceableness, Decency, and Conformity to such Customs and Canons Ecclesiastical, as are enjoined by Supreme Authority, and approved by the wisdom of the whole Church, as to its own parts and precincts, without any prejudice to other Churches.

With this calmness and clearness was this holy Bishop wont to state those popular and petty Disputes about Circumstances and Ceremonies. As to the Liturgy of the Church of England, you have, with me, set forth his Judgment; full of honour and esteem; not, that he was a rigid Verbalist, as to Words and Phrases (which as the Barks and Leaves of Trees, may change with age and time, while the Tree is the same:) But, as to the Matter and Method of it, he ever highly approved it, as very apt for the Divine Offices, for the Peoples edification and union. I am prone to believe, the Church of England might have had its peace at a far cheaper rate, than now it is like to gain it, if this Great and Good Man had lived to have over-awed the petulancy, and confuted the popular Sophistry of some rigid and endless Disputers, who, of all Arts, are hardest to learn that of ingenuous Retraction and sober Retreats, from their former Errors and Transports. Nor can you wonder at their restiveness (even after some variations are consented to; yea, after God's confutation of their preposterous presumptions) when you consider how much many of them are engaged in point of Reputation, and how dear that is to men, who weigh their Credit with their Consciences; yea, and put it into the Scales against the publick peace of Church and State, which, next God's glory, and our Souls salvation, should be dearest to every honest and good Christian.

I cannot but deplore with you, and all moderate men (yet with, submission to the Divine Will) the inestimable (and if I may say so after the manner of men) the unseasonable loss of this excellent Bishop; who departed out of the Chaos and Midnight of our English World, just as the Day of our Restitution began to dawn; when horrid Rebellion, Usurpation, and Sacrilege, had run themselves out of breath, and quite off their legs, into an Egyptian Mist of horrible Darknes, and Bog of Confusion, after a long tedious, giddy, cruel, and most deformed pursuit after Reformation in Church and State; for so it was at first pretended by all the Actors in our manifold Tragedies; till Hypocrisie grow-
ing

ing as impudent, as impious, cast off its Visors, when it had got the Sword into its Hand.

No man better knew the just Standard of Religion, and all Church-Affairs, than this learned and Religious Bishop did; both for Doctrine, Devotion and Discipline, for Faith and Manners, for Truth and Peace, for Sanctity and Solemnity, for good Order and Government, for Edification and Decency. No man better understood what was best; nor better expressed what he well understood. No man was abler to give good Counsel, or readier to obey good Laws. No man more zealous for just and sober Reformati^ons, where any decays were owned by publick Wisdom, and Supreme Authority, or evidenced by private humble Remonstrances from God's Word, and the Laws in force: Because he knew Religion to be, as a very weighty, so a very tender business, the great Concern of that God who is at once jealous for his own Glory, and solicitous for Man's Salvation. Nor may either the Traditions and Infirmities of Men, or the Prejudices and Presumptions of Time, contend with God's Word, or hinder the great designs of true Religion; which cannot be carried on, but in Conformity to the Word of God, which commands, as our exact obedience to Divine Precepts and Institutions, in point of Truth and Holiness; so our submission to the Churches orderly appointments, in point of Peace and Decency, as to things of indifferency, that are not punctually enjoyned or forbidden by the Word of God.

Hence it was, that no man (on the other side) was a more severe reprov^{er} and condemner of those private and pragmatick Spirits, which were prone rudely to obtrude either their Fancies, or their Affronts and Contumelies, upon the publick Liberty and Authority of the Church; meerly upon this presumption, that they think themselves, and their petty Parties, wiser than Church and State, Kings, Parliaments: As if the majority of the Church and Nation, could do nothing well, till they either ask counsel of these new Masters, or get leave of these grand Dictators, to execute what free Parliaments have enacted, and National Synods have advised as best for publick Piety and Peace.

The truth is, no Bishop of late years (since those admirable Prelates, Usher, Morton and Hall) hath made a greater Breach in the stability, honour, health, and safety of the Hierarchie of the Church of England, by their deaths, than this ample Person; who had equal strength, courage, and dexterity to do all things, which became a good Man, a good Christian, a good Minister, and a good Bishop. The first repair for this great loss the Church will owe to your pains, who restore to us something, yea, much of his divine Soul and Genius in his Sermons. I pray God, His and those other Bishops personal absence may be so supplied by us, their Successours, that no great vacancy, or defect may appear, as to their Learning, or Living; their Piety, or Charity; their Preaching, or Ruling; so far as God gives us ability, and the Law authority.

For

For my particular (who am under a double affliction: First, to have lost so excellent a Friend and Father: Next, to succeed him both in the Temple, and the Diocess of Excter, with so great disproportions to his Worth) yet amidst my private dejections, and publick dissatisfactions, I confess, I have still some welcome reflections in reference to this excellent Bishop. First, I joy to have lived in the Age when this grand Example lived; as Plato did, that he was coetaneous with Socrates; who made Virtue visible and useful to the World. Next, I remember, with great content, that particular favour and friendship, which for many years I was blessed with, from this most affable and courteous Bishop; whom no Honour leavened, no Diminution debased. Lastly, I rejoyce, not only to have perused His Manuscripts (or *Αὐτῶν γραμμάτια*) which I had some Months with me; but now also to read His elaborate Works in this exact Edition, which your meritorious diligence hath adorned. For which the better World will greatly thank you; though the worser, having most need of them, hath most cause so to do: For if any Man, since the Apostles, were able to cast out the most profane, petulant, and pertinacious Devils, this great Apollos, this mighty Prelate and Preacher, both in word and deed, would have done it, while he was living, both in the sanctity and severity of His private Conversation (set off with all serenity and sweetness) and most of all, by the Thunder and Lightning of His Preaching; where no man was so blind, as not to see the light of his Reasonings; no man so hard or stupid, as not to feel the strokes of His Impressions: Nor do I doubt of parallel effects (with God's blessing) to be wrought by these holy printed Charms, wherewith you have enabled him to speak being now dead. For which commendable industry and charity, that your reward (as His now is) may be from the most High God, as well as from His great Vice-gerent, our most gracious Sovereign (a King of so many Prayers, Mercies, and Miracles) is the hearty desire of,

S I R,

Your loving Friend, Fellow-

Servant, and Brother in Christ,

J O H N E X O N.

JUNE-12.
1661.

An Advertisement.

TO prevent all Mistakes, in so publick a Concern, as the genuine Works of the Right Reverend Father in God, *RALPH BROWNRIG*, late Lord Bishop of *Exeter* (my most worthy Friend, and immedate Predecessor) the perusal whereof (so far as they then could be got together) was by Mr. *Thomas Buck* (His Lordship's sole *Executor*) committed to me: These are to testify, that these *Sermons*, written by His Lordship's own Hand, and perused by Me, were delivered to Mr. *William Martyn*, according to His Lordship's design and desire, in order to have them published, as now they are; nor do I know of any other to be own'd, as authentick and complete.

JOHN GAUDEN, Bp. of *Exeter*.

IT pleased the Right Reverend Father in God, *RALPH BROWNRIG*, late Lord Bishop of *Exeter*, by particular Direction, under His Lordship's own Hand, to Mr. *Thomas Buck* (His Lordship's sole *Executor*) to dispose of all His *Sermons*, *Notes of Sermons*, *Papers*, *Paper-Books*, to me *William Martyn*, with liberty to print what I should think good. These are therefore to give notice, that if any have borrowed, or by any other means have obtained, any of His Lordship's *Sermons*, *Notes of Sermons*, *Papers*, or *Paper-Books*, wherein any of His Lordship's *Works* or *Exercises* are contained, that they are (of right) to restore them into my Hands; and hereby are desired to leave them, for me, with Mr. *John Martyn*, *Stationer*, at the *Bell* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, to be disposed of by me, as His Lordship directed me.

Here in this *Volume* are such *Sermons* of his Lordship's, as the Right Reverend Father in God, *JOHN GAUDEN*, now Lord Bishop of *Exeter*, hath perused and approved of. And nothing hereafter shall be made publick by me under the Name of Bishop *BROWNRIG*, but what shall be first commended to the view of His aforesaid Reverend and Worthy *Successour*.

If therefore any whosoever shall adventure to put forth any thing, as Bishop *BROWNRIG*'s, besides my self, 'tis to be accounted either fraudulently gotten, or out of imperfect Copies, and may prove a great dishonour to the aforesaid most Learned and Reverend Bishop, and very injurious, not only to me, but to those that shall buy it.

You will easily believe this, if you will compare that single *Sermon* lately thrust forth under Bishop *BROWNRIG*'s Name, concerning *Zerubbabel*, with that, that is presented to the World by

WILLIAM MARTYN.

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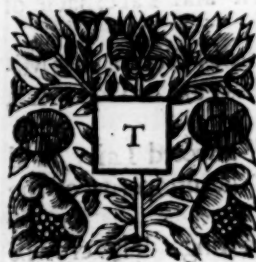
TWO
SERMONS

Preached upon the
Anniversary Solemnity
Of the Happy
INAUGURATION
OF
Our Dread Sovereign Lord
King CHARLES I.

The First Sermon.

II Sam VI. 12.

And it was told King David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the Ark of God.



THE course of this Story, that we have entred upon, relates to us a memorable Passage in the beginning of King David's Reign; his religious care for God's publick Worship, to reduce the Ark of God, and to bring it, and set it near unto himself in the head of *Jerusalem*.

It had been detained from God's People for a time in the Country of the *Philistines*. Thence miraculously it made way for it self, breaking out of that Country by many Judgments, to return into *Israel*.

First, it came to *Beth-shemesh*; then (as works of Religion go on but slowly and meet with many Interruptions) it sojourned in the house of *Abinadab*: from whence *David* intends to bring it up Triumphantly. But *Uzzah* failing in some part of his duty, and a sad judgment befalling him, *David* was glad to be rid of such an hazardous business, is afraid to entertain so dangerous a Guest, gives over the bring-

Sermon I. ing of the *Ark* any further, and turns the burden upon *Obed-Edom* a Levite, lodges the *Ark* of God in his house.

It lets us see the fitting condition that Religion, and God's Church hath here in this World. It hath its dwelling in *Templo deambulatorio*, (as *St. Augustine* speaks of the *Jews* Tabernacle.) First, after much ado, it hath its abode in *Israel*; then the Impiety of the People, and the Prophaneness of the Priests *Hophni* and *Phineas*, their lewd lives, forfeit the *Ark* to the Enemies of God: The *Ark* is taken, and carried captive into the land of the *Philistines*, Religion trod under foot, driven into Exile. Then God looks upon his Church, turns their Captivity, restores his *Ark* to His People, after He had revenged the Quarrel of his Covenant. And yet again, strange Varieties, and Hindrances to the establishing of it. First, the *Beth-shemites* prophane it, and a Judgment befalls them; then 'tis thrust into a private house. Now *David* bethinks himself, begins to advance it; yet again a new stop is put to Religion, it must sojourn with *Obed-Edom*. See the Ebbings and Wanings of the Church, and Religion. We cannot clip the wings of Truth, and entail it to our selves by an indefeasible Tenure; we may forfeit it, and see it taken from us, and carried into a strange Land; and when God returns it to us, yet our backwardness to receive it, and the cold welcome we give to it, may be a second provocation.

For the Words themselves, they are joyful Tidings brought to King *David* of the welfare, and prosperity of the Church of God; the welcome News of a great blessing, that Religion, and the Worship of God had begun in his Kingdom. Tidings, than which nothing more acceptable to this devout King. His first, and his greatest care was for the service of God, to advance that, and the Servitours of it: *Lord, remember David and all his affliction*. The finding out a resting-place for the *Ark* of God was a thought went near unto him: He afflicted his Soul with care, and anxiety, how to effect it: *He swore unto the Lord, and vowed it to the mighty God of Jacob*; it brake his sleep, interrupted his comforts, he envied himself his own Princely Palace, till the *Ark* was provided for.

A Text, I suppose, proper and pertinent, and (through the blessing of God upon us) seasonable, and suitable to this days Solemnity. And, if it had fallen into the hands of one whom leisure and other enablement had fitted for this service, it might have afforded plenty of matter for an holy Panegyrick.

Indeed, upon a particular survey of the Words, we may clearly discover an exact frame and model of a blessed Kingdom; the main ingredients that concur to the happiness of a Nation, meet here in the Text. *Plato* fancied the Form of a good Common-wealth; *Xenophon*, of a good King: Here, in this History, we may behold *non compositam figuram, sed expressam virtutem*, as *St. Ambrose* speaks. We have that really performed, which they fancied and imagined.

First, Here is a Nation blessed in the truth of Religion, and the Worship of God. What's the advantage and prerogative of a people? Chiefly, *that the Oracles of God are committed to them*. Here they have the *Ark* and Tabernacle of God settled amongst them.

Secondly, Here is a Nation blessed in a pious and prosperous Clergy, the Ministers and Servants of that Religion. Here is *Obed-Edom* takes care of Gods *Ark*, and it brings a blessing on him.

Thirdly, Here is a Nation blessed in a religious, and well-affected Laity, and People; such, as take notice of the welfare of Religion, of the prosperity of the Priesthood, and take comfort in it.

Fourthly, Here is a Nation blessed in a devout, and religious King. This crowns all the other blessings, and makes them compleat; a King that gladly hears of the flourishing and prosperity of Religion in his Kingdom, and of those that attend it.

Secondly, Here are no Priests of *Jeroboam*, irregular, base, and beggarly Attendants upon the *Ark* of God; but the Sons of *Levi*, religious in their Service, and prosperous in their Religion. King *Abijah* thought it no small assurance

assurance to his Kingdom against *Jeroboam*, that he had a lawful and honourable Priesthood : *The Sons of Aaron and the Levites are with us, that wait upon Gods Service* : he promised himself Victory upon that assurance, and he did obtain it, *2 Chron. xiii. 10.* Sermon I.

Thirdly, Here is no *Doeg* to inform against the Church and Clergy ; no *Tobiah*, or *Sanballat*, maligning the welfare of it, and traducing it to the King by any railing accusation ; but such as wish well to the Ministers of the Ark, rejoice, and delight in the Levites prosperity.

Fourthly, Here is no persecuting *Ahab* oppressing the Church, slaughtering, and sucking the blood of Gods Prophets ; no prophane *Gallio*, that can see *St. Paul* struck in his presence, and makes nothing of it : But a religious *David*, that cherishes the Priesthood, and seeks to do good to it, and wishes them good luck in the Name of the Lord.

To come to the words of my Text. They give forth a report of that success, which *Obed-Edom* found in entertaining the Ark. And in them observe these two particulars :

First, The Success it self, that befel *Obed-Edom*, *the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that pertained to him, because of the Ark of God.*

Secondly, The notice and observation, that's made of this success, *It was told King David.*

First is the Success, that *Obed-Edom* found, and in it we meet with four things observable :

First, Is the nature and quality of this Success ; it is a *Blessing*. *Secondly*, Is the kind of this Blessing ; it was an outward, visible, temporal blessing, the *blef-sing of prosperity*.

Thirdly, Is the latitude and extent of this blessing, how far it reached ; 'tis large and comprehensive ; it extends to *Obed-Edom, his house, and all that pertain to him.*

Fourthly, Is the reason and motive, that God had respect to that, which procured and brought down this blessing ; it was *because of the Ark of God.*

First, The first thing considerable is the Nature of this Success, it was a *Bles-sing*. If we reflect upon the former Passages of the *Ark of God*, we shall find contrary effects to this in my Text. It brought not a blessing upon all places and persons that had to do with it. Upon the *Philistines* it brought a curse, they were smote with sore Diseases, *the hand of God was heavy upon the Philistines, and he destroyed them* ; *1 Sam. v. 6.* Upon the men of *Beth-shemesh* it brought an heavy, and dreadful Judgment ; *five thousand of them slain for the Ark of God.* Upon *Uzzah*, and his Father *Abinadab*, it brought a great Calamity, *Uzzah was struck dead before the Ark of God.* Now, here, upon *Obed-Edom* it brings a *blef-sing*. Where-ever it came, they were either the better, or the worse for it ; it either blessed them, or cursed them.

Observe it ; The *Ark of God*, and the entertainment of it amongst us, is no indifferent thing ; the presence and profession of Religion, and our approach unto it, is not a matter of slight consequence : A person, or people are either the better or the worse for it : 'Tis either effectual to procure a blessing, or to fasten some curse or judgment upon them.

When God sends His Ark to us, pitches His Tabernacle, and dwells amongst us, it deeply concerns us to look about us. Sure God intends something towards us ; He is bringing some great mercy or judgment upon us. When *Samuel* came to *Beth-lehem*, 'tis said, *All the Elders of the Town trembled, and were perplexed.* They knew he came not for naught ; the presence of the Prophet did bode some great matter to them, for good or evil. 'Tis so with God, when He comes amongst us, sends to us the Ark of His presence, it concerns us to look to our selves : He comes as a faithful friend, or as a deadly foe, to us.

Thus God forewarned his people, when he sent his Angel amongst them, the Type of Christ, *Exod. xxiii. 20. Behold, I send an Angel before thee, beware of him,*

Sermon I. and obey his voice, provoke him not; he will prove either a saving, or a destroying Angel. God's Messengers come to a People, like his Angels to *Sodom*, not barely to lodge there, and rest themselves; but to work some great work there, either to save or to destroy that Nation. God counts it an high indignity, an argument of prophane Security, to think *He neither will do good nor ill*, *Zeph. i. 12.* *Isaiah* compares the sending of his Word to us to the Rain that waters the Earth: It comes not in vain, but *accomplishes that for which it is sent*; it brings up either wholesome herbs, or noysome weeds; furthers our Salvation, or hastens our Destruction.

The Gospel, 'tis no still, easie, gentle thing; it works strongly some way; 'tis either a *savour of life*, or a *savour of death*. 'Tis not like some Drug that Apothecaries will venture on, if it will do no good, it will do no hurt: But like strong Physick, it will either mend us, or end us. What *St. Paul* saith of our coming to the Sacrament, is true of all our Addresses to God, in any part of his service: We come together *εἰς τὸ κερταῖον*, or *εἰς τὸ ἥϊον*: For the better, or for the worse. The Ark where ever it comes, makes the place it rests on, an *Hebal*, or a *Gerezim*, a place of blessings, or a place of curses. 'Tis fatal to a Nation, as 'twas to *Capernaum*, it lifts it nearer unto Heaven, or throws it lower into Hell, *Matth. xi. 23.*

Well, to *Obed-Edom* it brings a blessing: And that implies two things:

I. A gracious acceptance of *Obed-Edom's* service.

II. A bounteous remuneration, and requital of it.

I. Here is a gracious acceptance; God takes graciously whatsoever service we perform to the advancement of his Religion; any supply we make to the furtherance of his Worship, finds a loving acceptance. Pride, and Contempt amongst men, often slights the proffers of our love, especially if mean, but God casts a gracious eye upon any well-meant Duties, that are thus tendred to him. *David* had but a purpose to build an House to God, how lovingly doth God take notice of it? He dispatches an Embassadour to him, sends *Nathan* to tell him how well he took it, *2 Chron. vi. 8.*

Nay, not only magnificent Intendments, but the smallest and poorest helps are prized and accepted. Not only the rich Contributions of Gold and Silver, but they that brought Skins, and Leather, and Hair-cloth for the Tabernacle were accepted, and remembred. The Widows two Mites, cast into Gods Treasury, how honourably are they valued by Christ himself? How many Queens are forgotten when this poor Woman is put upon record for all Eternity? *Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached, this that she hath done, shall be spoken of her.* The meanest good deed to Christ and his Church, hath a Patent of Eternity. A little Manna, but a vanishing Meteor, lay it up in the Ark, it never putrefies; the cheapest Contributions to the Worship of God shall endure perpetually.

See this gracious acceptance of Gods in the Law of Sacrifices, *Lev. i. 17.* Rich men were to offer Bulls and Rams; but the Poor man cannot reach to that charge and expence; a pair of young Pigeons were his richest Sacrifice. What saith God of that Offering; how doth he accept it? *vers. 17.* 'Tis a burnt-offering of a sweet savour unto the Lord. As Christ speaks of two Sparrows; so are not two young Pigeons sold for a small price? Yet so mean an Offering is not forgotten before God: Yea, the very Goats-hairs are numbered, and valued by him.

II. Here is a real retribution, and remuneration. *Quorum acceptatur Deus, eorum & remunerator*, saith *Tertullian*. He puts not off *Obed-Edom* with empty favours, and kind acceptance; but leaves a Blessing upon him. *Obed-Edom* had been at cost with God's Ark; see here God defrayes the charges, payes him abundantly for his entertainment. *Evangelium non est a symbolis hospes*. The Gospel never lodges with us on free-cost. There was never any man lost by God, and his service; never any man gave him his Worship, his Ark entertainment, but he reaped a blessing by it. *Abraham*, he entertains Gods Angels, the Promise of *Isaac* was then sealed up to him. *Lot* receiv'd, and harbour'd those Messengers of Heaven, and a miraculous deliverance was granted to him. The *Sareptan* Widow was at cost with *Elijah*; what a reward had she for it? Who got most by that Welcome? *E-*

lijah

Iijah ; or *She* ? *Viduae fecit, non Eliæ*, saith *St. Augustine*. The main blessing was upon the poor Widow. The blessing that *Eli* pronounces upon *Elkanah* for dedicating his Son to the service of the Tabernacle, belongs to any service we do to God's Ark and Worship ; *The Lord give thee children* (encrease and multiply thee) *for the loan thou hast lent unto the Lord*, 1 Sam. ii. 20. Dost thou tender up any thing to advance Gods service ? 'Tis not lost, or given, but a loan to the Lord. *Τὸ δίδωμι, 'tis τὸ δανείζω*, saith *St. Basil* ; He pays Use, and Principal, and in the highest proportion ; not *centessimum*, but *centuplum*, saith *St. Chrysostom*, even an hundredfold.

How should it encourage us to invite this Ark of God, and give entertainment to it ? Like *Jael* to set open our Tent to him, *Turn in, my Lord, turn in to me* ; as *Lydia* importuned *St. Paul*, *If you have counted me faithful, enter into my house*, *ἡ γὰρ ἐπεβίβασατο ἡμᾶς*, and she compelled them.

But it will breed trouble, and charges, and loss of Time in this solemn attendance. What then ? *Obed-Edom* forecasts all this, the Ark would bring business and charge, and it concerned him to look to his Life too, now God was so near him. Well, he knows he shall not lose by it : the Lord will pay him for the Loan he lends him ; both Use and Principal shall be returned to him.

There was a superstitious Opinion maintained by some Fryers in *Gerson's* time, that a man never waxed older for the time he spent at hearing of Mass ; *Nemo senescit pro tempore, quo quis Missam audit*. He condemns, and confutes it. But sure, it hath this true Moral ; the time, the cost and charges we are at for the Worship of God brings not the least loss to us, but a great advantage. And God assures us of it. See how he encourages the maintaining and furnishing His House with supplies ; *Mal. iii. 10. Bring all the Tythes into the store-house, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me saith the LORD, if I open not the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing*. Thus *Solomon* the builder of God's House advises us, *Prov. iii. 9. Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thy encrease*. I, but that's chargeable : And we love a life to serve God without cost. That Religion is best that's best cheap. Mark the recompence of God's blessing upon it, *verf. 10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty*. As *Tertullian* truly, *Quantiscunque sumptibus constat, sacrum est Pietatis nomine sumptum facere*.

That's the first particular ; the Nature of the success, 'twas a Blessing.

Secondly, A second thing observable, is the kind of this Blessing. 'Twas an outward and temporal blessing ; the blessing of prosperity upon his person and possession. No doubt his zeal and care for God's Worship and Service, stored him with spiritual and eternal Blessings. That's the main reward and wages of a *Levite*. *Indè Pastores expectant mercedem, unde Populus salutem* ; saith *St. Augustine*. The world (saith *Luther*) is not worthy to reward a good deed ; much less this sacred work of serving God's Ark. We may expect here *sustentationem necessitatis à populo* ; but *mercedem dispensationis à Domino*, saith the Father. *Obed-Edom's* great reward, is mercy with the Lord at that day, as *St. Paul* prays for *Onesiphorus*, that harboured and refreshed him.

And yet we see the blessing vouchsafed, and expressed in the Text, is outward and temporal :

I. 'Tis an usual Blessing.

II. 'Tis a suitable and congruous Blessing.

I. In general, temporal Blessings are the usual rewards of Piety and Religion : All temporal good things they belong unto it.

1. In Gods Original purpose and intendment. The blessings of this World are purposed by God, as appurtenances to his Worship. The World was made for the Church, and all the Plenty of it are appendants to it. *Plato* could tell us, that the World is continued by daily Successions, that there may be a people that may worship God in it. He hath enriched and furnished his Church, *cum mundi dote*, as the Father speaks. The World is as the Dowry of the Church, as the Glebe of Religion. 'Tis the highest honour these outward things can have, to be thus employed to support Gods service. *Aristotle* laughs at *Protarchus* for saying, *Eos lapides*

Sermon I. *pides fortunatos esse, ex quibus altaria extructa sunt.* Sure, 'tis the felicity of the Creatures, when they are made to accommodate Gods Service and Worship.

Hence we see, the Finishing of the Church gives Date to the World. When that's accomplished, the World shall cease. At that day the Stars shall fall, like Leaves from a Fig-tree, saith our Saviour. *When the fruit is gathered, saith St. Chrysostom, then the Leaves fall; when the Church is collected and fully finished, the Creatures shall fade, and fall away presently.*

2. None other have so special a promise of temporal Blessings, as those that belong to this Ark, and are homagers to it. 'Tis Piety only that hath the Promises. A prophane man, that regards not this Worship, may make a shift to prosper, but 'tis at all adventures. The Servants of Gods Ark have a more special claim to it. Nay, the neglect of the Ark forfeits all. As Tenants that refuse to do their homage, to perform suit and service, that will not pay their Land's rent, forfeit their Estates, make them lyable to seisure: *My servants shall eat* (saith God in *Esay*) *but ye shall be hungry: My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty.* The Provisions are for the household, that they may have Bread enough.

5. The practice proves it, that even temporal Blessings are annexed by Gods ordination to his Service and Worship. *Noah*, and his holy portion, reserved for the Blessings of the World; when prophane ones were destroyed. The Patriarchs had the Blessings of this life, upon this Conveyance made Heirs of the World. The Commonwealth of *Israel* then prospered, when Religion prospered. Search the Chronicles and Annals of the Kings of *Israel*, the times when Religion was advanced were prosperous times. In *Dauids* and *Solomons* Reigns, how did Holiness and Happiness meet together? Piety and Prosperity kissed each other. Under *Asa* and *Jehoshaphat*, and *Hezekiah*, things went well in the Land: And their apostasie from this Ark forfeited all, and God took the forfeiture.

They chose unto themselves new Gods, then was War in the Gate, Judg. v. 8. That's the grand Impiety, that bred all their misery. *They chose new Gods.*

(1.) They must have many Gods, whereas God should be one, and his Name should be one, *Zech. xiv. 9.*

(2.) And new Gods, Novelty, 'tis a contradiction to a Deity. *Quis novus Deus nisi falsus?* Any innovation in Religion is odious, and dangerous. *Quod utilitate prodest, novitate perturbat,* saith *Augustine*. But a new God? 'Tis an impossible contradiction. God can neither be old nor new; *Novus Deus non fuit, Vetus Deus non erit,* saith *Tertullian*. Both bad, but of the two, the new God is more suspicious.

(3.) And then *they chose new Gods*, that aggravates their Apostasie. Had they been imposed, or inforced upon them by the power of an Enemy, it had been a less impiety; but wantonly to dote upon another God, to loath their own God, and to long for a new, 'tis a grand impiety. *Then was War in the Gates:* That puts an end to all their prosperity.

That's the first, it was an usual Blessing. But,

II. There are some congruities, why God rewards *Obed-Edom's* service in lodging the Ark, with temporal blessings. Conceive the reason, and congruity of this gracious dealing in these four proportions.

1. Here is *proportio præmii cum officio*. This temporal reward was proportionable to the service that *Obed-Edom* did. It was an external outward service done to the Ark, he entertained and lodged it, and was at Charges with it; and accordingly God rewards him here with an outward blessing.

Even these external services, and offices done to Gods Church, are accepted and rewarded. *Hiram* shall have Corn and Oyl, for affording materials to the building of the Temple. *Cyrus* shall prosper, and be victorious, for restoring Gods House. Lodge him in thy heart, and Heaven is thy reward. I, but lodge him in thine House, and God values that at a temporal rate. Egypt fared the better for entertaining the Patriarchs. God stored that Countrey, because his Church was to sojourn there.

2. Here

2. Here is *proportio præmii cum statu*. Outward Prosperity was proportionable to the state of that Church, which was trained up under external and temporal Promises. Gods dealings with them were most-what visible and apparent; they lived less by Faith, and more by Sense, and so were accordingly dealt withal. Indeed neither were they without spiritual, nor we without temporal blessings. But yet the Gospel deals more in spiritual Commodities, the Law with temporal. Both Churches sing *David's Songs*; *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, even before the Sons of men!* Blessings laid up, are the blessings of the Gospel: blessings laid out before the Sons of men, are the blessings of the Law. Under the Law, the immediate promises were temporal long life, and prosperity: they were Types and pawns of spiritual blessings. Contrary, under the Gospel our Promises are spiritual; grace, and salvation: and they are pledges to us of temporal blessings. *If thou take the left hand, I will go to the right*, said *Abraham* to *Lot*. The Jewish Church, saith *Ambrose*, went ad *sinistram*, enjoyed outward blessings, the blessings of the left hand: the Christian Church, with *Abraham*, that goes ad *dextram*; the blessings of the right hand is the Christians portion.

3. Here is *proportio præmii cum pœna*. This temporal prosperity on *Obed-Edom*, 'tis proportionable to those judgments God sent upon others for prophaning his Ark. He had revenged the indignity offered to it by the Philistines with visible Plagues: so the *Bethshemites* and *Uzzah*, open and apparent Judgments seized upon them, for their irreverent Usage of it. As he sends temporal Judgments upon the Contemners of it, so he rewards the religious Servitors of it with apparent Blessings.

It shews the Riches of His Mercy, as well as of His Justice; that he is as ready to reward, as to punish; that He knows as well how to encourage his Servants, as to repay his Enemies.

1. The visible demonstration, and interchangeable course of these two Attributes, doth manifest, and set forth His Glory compleatly. *Bonus Deus* and *Iustus Deus*, were *Marcion's* two imaginary Gods. He thought the God of the old Testament was all for Justice; the God of the New Testament was the God of Mercy. No, our God is both just, and merciful: He knows how to reward his Friends, and to plague his Enemies.

2. It prevents the scandal and quarrel that Ungodly men would make at his Judgments. They are ready to say, *God is an hard Master: he can spy a fault quickly, and revenge it presently; but not regard, or reward any duty or service: 'Tis in vain to serve Him.*

3. This intercourse of Mercy and Justice, will keep us in the best Temper in our Addresses to him. It will make us *gaudere cum tremore*, rejoyce with trembling; which is the best joy. Have one eye on His Judgments, profane not his Service, He can plague thee for it: keep another eye on his Mercies, honour his Ark, he knows how to bless thee.

The interchange and mixture of both these, will make us conclude as *St. Peter* did, "If God saved *Noah*, and destroyed the World, if he delivered *Lot*, "and overthrew *Sodom*, if he destroyed *Uzzah*, blessed *Obed-Edom*: then surely the Lord knows how to take vengeance on his enemies, and withall takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.

4. Here is *proportio præmii cum præcepto*. Gods visible prospering of *Obed-Edom* the Levite, for attending the Ark, suits well with his Law, for the Levites maintenance; he must be partaker, and share with us in our temporal prosperity.

It seems, in Gods esteem, 'tis no such Indecency for a Levite to prosper, and to enjoy a plentiful portion of Temporal blessings. Bless, Lord, his substance, was *Moses* his benediction upon the holy Tribe. And the good Kings followed the steps of their Law-giver: *David* allotting out their portion; *Hezekiah* commanding, and compelling the people to pay Tythes of all things, and that in abundance, 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 8. and he rejoyced in it; *When the King and the*

Princes

Sermon I. Princes saw the heaps of Tythe, they blessed the Lord, and his people Israel.

And hath it not been the successive Care of our Gracious Sovereigns thus to preserve the Levites Portion? Queen Elizabeth, in Her time forbidding the alienation of Church-lands, or Leasing them out for any long time, but only to the Crown. That Clause was left, as the Door in the Temple, only for the Prince to pass in at, Ezek. xlv. But when others got their false Keys to it, Renowned King James shut it up against Himself too; Blessing and Honour be upon His Memory for it. And how hath our Gracious Sovereign added to the Care of His Royal Father, directing His express Commands, to bring the letting of the Churches Inheritance within the certain, and moderate compass of one and twenty years; Only good Kings have delighted in the Churches prosperity.

And so, on the contrary, 'twas the observable shame of Ahab's ill Reign, that the Prophets of God were mean, and in want, and necessity, poor, and in debt; their Children must be Bond-men, to satisfy the Creditors of their deceased Fathers, 2 Kings. iv. 'Twas small credit for the Ephesians, to hear St. Paul protest, that his own hands had supplied his necessities. And is it not the indelible stain of many Patrons and Parishes, that the Guides of their Souls should be driven unto Secular employments to maintain themselves; forced to hold some Trade in Commendam with their Spiritual Functions; *Lapides Sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum*, was Jeremy's Lamentation; that is, saith Gregory, the Ministers of the Church are scattered and dispersed unto Secular Distractions.

No, these Fowls of Heaven should be provided for, without their sowing and reaping. These Lillies of Paradise should not toil or labour, and yet grow and flourish. As Augustine alluding to God's curse upon Cain, for killing his brother, *Let the earth be barren unto thee, when thou tillest it; Quid congruentius*, saith he, *quam ut illum, cujus scelere frater occisus est, in terra laborantem, sterilitas sequeretur? illis, quorum munere fratres salvantur, de crastino minime cogitantibus, fructuosa terra serviret? Cain*, that killed his Brother, even when he labours, is cursed with barrenness; the Levites, that save their brethren, though they labour not, are blessed with fruitfulness.

That's the second thing observable, the kind of the Blessing, outward Prosperity.

Thirdly, The third is the latitude and extent of this Blessing, how far it reached to Obed-Edom's house, and all that pertained to him. God bestows a diffusive, comprehensive blessing; like some honourable Guest, all the Servants in the house taste of his bounty, fare the better for him. This blessing on Obed-Edom, like the precious Ointment upon Aaron, 'twas shed on his head, and ran down to the lowest skirts of his garment.

So then, here is the portion, and inheritance of God's Servants; their piety to God's Ark, and Worship, pours a blessing upon them, and diffuses it self to all that belong to them.

I. His Person, that's blessed, Religion brings health to the Navel, and marrow to the Bones. God shews the Tokens and Testimonies of His favour to them. He hides them in the shadow of his hand. Kings and Priests, Kings the maintainers, and Priests the Servitors of His Ark, have a special Charter of Protection against all annoyance; *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*. In common Calamities He makes a special provision for them: Baruch hath his life given for a Prey. Jeremy is exempted from the common Captivity. *When I make up my Jewels*, I will remember them. If an house be on fire, men take most care for their Plate and Jewels, though other things burn. When God sends his Judgments upon a Nation, He gives a charge to them, as David to Joab, use my Prophets gently, entreat them well for my sake. Their persons are blessed.

II. His posterity is blessed. 'Tis Gods usual course to honour His Servants Piety by blessing their Posterity. And the Scripture observes it in Obed-Edom, 1 Chron. xxvi. 8. (1.) He was blessed with a numerous Progeny: threescore and two of Obed-Edom's Family. (2.) They were blessed with employment, all made Officers in the House of God. (3.) Blessed with enablement to discharge that employment:

ment: all able men of strength, *mighty men of valour* for the Service of the Temple. St. Hierom reports of *Uzzah*, that his shoulder was shrunk up, and withered; he carted the Ark, when he should have carried it on his shoulder: that part was branded for it. (4.) They were blessed with Honour, they were made Rulers and Commanders through the house of their Father: And the reason of all is given them; and 'tis this of my Text, *for God blessed him*. God's Tabernacle dwelt with him, and now his Posterity dwells in God's Temple. Thus David's piety was rewarded; *Thou wast purposed to build me an house, I will build thee a sure house*, saith God, 2 Sam. vii. and *blest thy seed after thee*. The *Shunamite*, the harboured the Prophet, entertained and lodged him, God blesses her with Posterity: *She hath done all this for us, what shall we do for her again?* A Son is bestowed on her. On the contrary, *Ahab* persecutes and havocks God's Prophets, pulls down his *Altars*; his whole Family is swept away; seventy sons of *Ahab* cut off, and destroyed. *He that destroys the Temple of God, him shall God destroy*; he shall pull down the walls of it in the death of his eldest, and deface the gates of it in the death of his youngest Son. Zecharie's Book of Curses shall enter into his House, and consume the timber, and the pillars of it.

III. His possessions are blessed; preservation, increase, a comfortable enjoying them. Religion brings all with it. *Obed-Edom* made his house a Sanctuary for God, now God makes it a Sanctuary for him, a place for safety. If the King lodges in a private house, the Priviledges of the Court belong to it; Robbery, or Violence offered there, is an hainous offence: All within the Verge have a Patent of Protection. While the people repaired thrice in the year to visit this Ark, and to worship before it, God secured their Country against all their Enemies, he will Man and maintain their Frontier-Towns against any Enemies in-roads, and invasions, *Exod. xxxiv*. He makes an Hedge about *Obed-Edom*, as he did about *Job*, about his house, and all that he had; *Thou hast blessed his Possessions: And his substance is increased*.

IV. His actions and undertakings are blessed; good success attends him. David's prayer for the Levites betides him. *We wish you good luck, ye that are of the House of the Lord*. That, whereas God blows upon, and blasts the courtes of prophane men, *Obed-Edom*, and such as he, have a prosperous success. He sees the travel of his Soul, and eats the labours of his hands with comfort, all that he goes about shall prosper with him.

V. His friends too, they fare the better for him; a blessing on them too. *Obed-Edom* is become a Favourite of Heaven: By lodging the Ark, he can speed suits for others, obtain blessings not for himself only, but for others also. The *Shunamite* that harboured the Prophet may obtain any request, either of the King, or the Captain of the Host. *Rahab*, for entertaining of the Spies, saves all her Kindred, and acquaintance; her house is a Sanctuary to all that come into it. 'Tis observable that all the six Cities of Refuge appointed in *Israel*, were all of them Cities belonging to the Levites. God honoured the holy Tribe with that high prerogative, made them an hiding-place, and as the horns of the Altar, to protect others. And this enlargement of blessing upon all that he had, had a three-fold ground for it.

1. 'Tis *redundantia misericordiae*: Mercy, 'tis still over-flowing and redundant. 'Tis a small thing, saith David to God, *that thou hast brought me hitherto; thou hast promised good to thy Servants House for a great while to come*. Is this the manner of man, O God, thus to requite small services with such large rewards? But 'tis the way of his Mercy; it keeps not within his own Channel, but overflows the Bank. *Good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over*, exceeding abundantly; *Ultra merita*, nay *supra vota*, saith Bernard, above all we can ask or think.

2. 'Tis *prærogativa officii*. This kind of service in advancing Gods Worship, honouring of his Ark, hath this kind of blessing usually vouchsafed it, it brings blessing upon a man, and upon his Posterity. That Commandment, that provides for Gods Ark, and Worship, and the maintaining of it, assures this favour in the

Sermon I. largest terms, it promises mercy to a thousand Generations of them that obey it. As, on the contrary, the sin of Sacrilege involves a man, and all that is his, in the curse that follows it. *Achan* perished not alone in his Sacrilege, his whole family smarted, and was rooted out. This sin is as Leprosie in the walls, eats out the stone and timber, roots the foundation, like *Gebazy's* spot, 'tis an original Curse to all his Posterity. *David* vowed his service to build God a Temple: What was the special mercy God assured to him for it? *Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy Throne.* He swears to God, he would build him an house: God swears to him, *Thy Children shall sit upon thy Throne for ever.*

The thankfulness of this day, and your own Meditations, can point out the parallel; and the sure mercies of *David* be his portion for it.

3. Here is *congruitas retributionis*. *Obed-Edom*, and all that he had, was blessed: he, and all that he had, were serviceable to the Ark; and so all that he had shares in the blessing. The best way to secure all we have, is to sanctifie all we have, by this holy employment. *Honour God with all thine increase*: and then all thine increase shall be enriched with a blessing. The Jewish Doctors have a saying (I wish Christians would believe it) that *Decimæ* are *sepes divitiarum*; a just payment of Tyths is as an Hedge or Fence about all our Possessions: Gods store-house is our best assuring-house; pay thy dues to that, that the rest may prosper with thee. *Noah* offered up to God of every kind, when he could have it; that every kind might receive a blessing from him. The least fraudulent detaining of Gods right and portion, makes all that thou hast liable to his Justice, as he that purchases but one foot of Ward-land, makes all his Estate lyable to the King. I pass,

Fourthly, to the fourth particular; the reason and motive that God had respect to, that which procured and brought down this blessing: it was because of the Ark of God. And the strength of this reason will appear in a double reference.

I. Respectively to the Ark it self, that was entertained.

II. Respectively to *Obed-Edom*, that did entertain it.

I. Look upon this blessing in reference to the Ark; that sacred Utenfil brought a blessing with it. And then the several considerations of it, will shew the several respects and reasons of this blessing. I will touch them briefly.

1. The Ark brings a blessing to *Obed-Edom's* house; it was *signum præsentiæ divinæ*: The Ark was a visible token and sign of Gods more immediate and gracious presence. The Ark it was Gods resting place; *He dwelt between the Cherubims*, *Psal. lxxx.* 'Twas the dwelling of His Name, *Psal. lxxiv. 7.* Where the Ark was, there God pitch'd his Tent; *Here will I dwell, for I have a delight in it.*

Now his gracious presence always brings a blessing with it. As light is, where the Sun is, so where God's presence is, blessings always attend him. If *Solomon's* servants were happy, that stood in his presence, how happy are they that wait in God's Courts! *David* highly prizes this favour; being in exile, removed from this Ark, how doth he long for it! *O! when shall I appear before the presence of God!* *Psal. lxxv. 4.* *Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts; he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thine house, even of thy holy Temple.* When God dwells amongst us, when he continues with us, we may hope for a blessing.

2. The Ark brings a blessing with it; it was *signaculum fœderis*, the visible token and pledge of his Covenant. 'Tis called *Arca fœderis*, the Ark of Gods Covenant. The Ark then brings a blessing with it, because it represents and seals Gods Covenant with his people. And that's the Tenure and Charter of all our blessings. While the Covenant continues with us, we are a people near unto him. God's Tabernacle is with men, and he will be their God, and they shall be his people.

When he places his Ark amongst us, there passes a mutual *Vouchè* betwixt God and us, *Deut. 26. 18.* *He avouches us to be his people, and we avouch him to be our God.* And this Covenant is the Conveyance of all mercies and favours, 'tis the pledge of his Promises. *Evangelium*, 'tis *cautio præmissiois*, saith *St. Ambrose*, 'tis a pledge,

pledge, and Caution to make good his Promises. We may plead this Covenant in any need, or exigent; *Tanquam ex syngrapha fides impetrat*, saith St. Ambrose. Faith presses God's Covenant; *Look upon the Covenant*, saith David. As Augustine of his Mother, *Ingesit tibi tuam syngrapham*: she urged God with his own hand-writing, pleaded his Covenant. Keep close to this Ark of the Covenant, 'tis our *Palladium*, the pledge of our prosperity, and assurance of all our prosperity.

3. The Ark brings a blessing with it; 'twas *instrumentum cultus*, the choice and chief Instrument, and Appurtenance of God's Worship. They directed all their Worship that way; *Give ear, O thou that dwellest between the Cherubims*. So then the Ark brings a blessing with it, because with that was celebrated the Worship of God. Piety and devotion in the Worship of God, 'tis the greatest breeder, and procurer of blessing. Here is a chief reason why Obed-Edom prospered; his House was a constant Oratory, and Temple to God. God honours such daily servitors, and sets much by them, that put him not off with some set-days service; like Church retainers: but those, that, like menial servants, behold him daily, *Certis diebus legere, & orare, & non omnibus, fastidientis est, & non diligentis*; saith the Father. They, whose Houses, Chappels, Studies, can testify their daily Devotion, may with Obed-Edom look for a Blessing.

4. The Ark brings a Blessing with it: 'twas *Typus Christi*, a sacred Mystery, representing Christ to them. He, indeed, is the true Ark of the Covenant, *Arca Testamenti*: He the *propitiatory*, and only true Mercy-seat; upon him the Cherubims look, on Him they attend. Then the Ark came out of the *Philistines* Country, when by his Resurrection (which now we celebrate) He mightily bore down the Gates of Death. Indeed Christ is both Ark and Altar; Temple and Sacrifice: Morning and Evening Sacrifice are accomplished in him. His Passion began at the third hour, the time of the morning Sacrifice, ended at the ninth hour, the time of the evening Sacrifice. *Arca nostra Christus in caelo est*, saith Irenaeus. He is the golden Altar of all our Services. And Christ, we know, He is the Author, and Donor, the Mediator, and Meritor of all Mercies, and Blessings; *He blesses us with all kind of blessings in Christ*.

5. The Ark brings a blessing with it: 'twas *Oraculum benedictionis*. From before the Ark God delivered and pronounced his Blessings; from thence they looked to receive a blessing. *Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth*, Psal. lxxx. 1. God makes his Ark and Tabernacle the Staple and Store-house of all his blessings, *Exod. xx. 24. In all places where I record my Name, I will come to thee, and bless thee*.

Hence we see, in Scripture that Gods blessings are not given from Heaven immediatly, but from his Ark and Sanctuary, and place of his Worship, *Psal. cxxxiv. 3. The Lord, that made Heaven and Earth, bless thee out of Sion*. *Psal. cxxxiii. 3. The Lord hath commanded His blessing, and life, for evermore*. The Ocean of blessings indeed is in Heaven, but the Spring, and Well-head, whence we must draw them, that's his Ark in Sion. *Noli quærere benedictiones, quæ non sunt ex Sione*, saith Augustine. The Churches blessing, the blessing of Aaron: 'tis *Scitula Gratia*. Even Balak confessed, that the blessing of the Prophet had great force and vertue in it.

The Heathen, when they prayed in good earnest, *Non ad Capitolium, sed ad Cælum, respiciunt*, saith Tertullian. And 'tis the natural Prospect of Faith and Prayer. And yet God's People were to look, *Non ad Cælum tantum, sed ad Sanctuarium*, towards the Temple, as the seat of his Oracle, and the fountain of Blessing.

That's the first Reference to the Ark it self.

II. The Ark brings a blessing on Obed-Edom in another reference, respectively to him, and his entertainment of it, which commended him, and his service to Gods acceptation, and brought a blessing upon him.

1. He entertained, and used his sacred Sojourner, *Summâ reverentiâ*, with all due reverence, and veneration. The *Philistines* they were plagued *ob prophanam insultationem*, they insulted and triumphed over it. The *Bethshemites*, they were slain *ob irreverentem exultationem*; they received it joyfully, but they were too bold with it.

Sermon I.

Uzzah struck dead *ob neglectum, & temeritatem*; he failed in his attendance of it. But *Obed-Edom* received it reverently, and receives a blessing for it. *Sancta Sancte*. He knew the manner of the God of *Israel*, and the reverence that is due to Him. This is the Lesson *Moses* read to *Aaron*, upon the death of his two Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *The Lord will be sanctified in all that come near Him*. 'Tis not every welcome in Gods Ark or Religion, that will find acceptance; we may be too bold, homely, and familiar with it. *Let's have Grace*, saith *St. Paul*, *Hebr. xii. 28, 29. whereby we may serve God acceptably*; how is that? *with reverence and godly fear*; why so? *For our God is a consuming fire*. He received it reverently.

2. He entertained it *summâ promptitudine*: he received the Ark then when others were shie of it, loth to come near to it, or to have to do with it. *David* refused to bring it to his house, *Vers. 9*. The *Beth-shemites* sent it away to *Kirjath-jearim*, glad to be rid of it; and so *Obed-Edom*, like *Zacheus*, he comes forth readily, and receives it joyfully.

I, this is thank-worthy with God, to own his Ark then, when others neglect it, and keep aloof from it. It may breed trouble to us to have it too near us. Indeed, 'tis the Levites Portion, and we of that Tribe shall do well to reckon of it. We must stick to the Ark of God, and bear it upon our shoulders, and lodge it in our houses, when all others forsake it. *If I perish, I perish*: the Ark must not be forsaken. As the Roman Souldiers sware to their General, *Pugnabo pro sacris, & solus, & cum aliis*. It becomes *Elijah* to be zealous for his God, though left alone, and none to take part with him.

Blessed be God, we live under a King, under whom it is not a shame, but an honour to bear the Ark. The Levites may well bear it; when the King dances before it, and glories in the presence of it.

But yet, had we an *Ahab*, as we have a *David*, the Levites must not give over the Ark. We must learn to be partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel, as *St. Paul* instructs *Timothy*. And God had forewarned *Paul* of it, *I have shewed him what things he must suffer for my Name*. It was a clause in his Ordination at his first Apostleship. *You are they that have continued with me in my Temptation*, saith Christ to his Apostles. *Nudum Christum nudus sequar*, should be the Levites resolution; and it brings a Blessing with it.

3. He entertained it *Roboratâ fide*. 'Twas a strong temptation, to see so many Mischiefs before him, thousands destroyed, and struck dead by it; and so it was a strong Faith in him, that could overcome those fears and temptations, and hope to speed well with it.

That Faith honours God much, and is highly prized by him, that can over-look and over-leap dangers and difficulties in doing him service, put its life in his hand, and stick to God then, when perils beset him. *Obed-Edom* believed that God was intreatable, and that *as with the froward He had shewed himself froward, so with the upright He would shew himself merciful*. 'Twas great Piety in the third Captain of Fifty, when two Captains with their Fifties were slain before him, submissively to sue to the Prophet *Elijah*, *O let my life be precious in thine eyes*, and he sped accordingly.

I have done with the first part of my Text, the blessed success that beset *Obed-Edom* for receiving the Ark. Now follows the

Second, The Notice and Observation that was made of this success; *And it was told King David*.

And here is a double Notice.

First, The Notice they take of it.

Secondly, The Notice they give of it.

First, They take Notice of it: Mens Eyes are open upon *Obed-Edom*, and his House, now the Ark is with him: The Ark, and the Priesthood, and the success of both; Religion, and the Welfare of it, is made a matter of Observation. They will have Eyes upon them.

I. A gazing Eye; a sort of men, that look upon Religion, and the Attendants of

of it, as a Novelty, or some strange thing. *Behold, here am I, saith the Prophet; and those that thou hast given me, are for Signs and Wonders.* As Herod beheld Christ, to see what he could do; look on him a little, and then slight, and scorn him, and set him at naught.

II. A malignant Eye: *Obed-Edom* must look for such Eyes upon him, that repine at his welfare. *These Levites grow too rich; a great deal less is too much for them.* Shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians; and so are God's Ministers to prophane worldlings. Thus *Doeg's* Eye was on the Priests, to espy any Miscarriage, and inform against them.

III. But this was an Eye of judicious, and religious Observation. *Mark the Upright, and behold the Just.* That was the Eye, that now beheld *Obed-Edom*. They observe his condition judiciously, and judge of it soberly, impute his prosperity to God, as the proper Cause, and to the Ark of God, as to the proper Motive, and Reason of it.

What moved them to that?

Three things especially;

1. Their Piety.
2. Their Charity.
3. The Evidence of the thing it self.

1. Their Piety; they speak like *David's* servants, and subjects; they attribute this Prosperity to the Blessing of God. They talk not of it, as the *Philistins* did of the Judgment that beset them for the Ark of God; *May be, it is but a chance that hath hapned to us.* 1 Sam. vi. Good-luck hath befallen *Obed-Edom*: and make no more of it. No; true Piety knows these Blessings are not *missilia fortunæ*, the Doles of blind Fortune; but the gracious Dispensations of Divine Providence. *Riches and Honour are in the hand of Wisdom,* Prov. iii. that reaches them out knowingly, and advisedly; not at the foot of Fortune, to be spurned into the World at all adventures. *Obed-Edom* they knew was God's Household servant, and so was at his Masters finding; shifts not for himself. *It was God that gave him strength to be rich, and stored him with plenty.*

2. Their Charity moves them to this observation of *Obed-Edom's* Prosperity: they gladly take notice of his good service to the Ark, and impute his welfare to that motive.

Neither *David*, nor his followers, make the like construction of *Uzzah's* Calamity; The Scripture indeed expresses it, but none of them say, *This judgment beset him for his prophanation.* Charity may safely make constructions, and applications of Blessings and Mercies, and it delights to do it; but interpretations of Judgments are not so warrantable. In such Cases, *Ille debet judicare, qui non potest errare.* Is Gods hand upon the Land in any Visitation? Let every man bewail his own Sins, *The Plague of his own heart*, and mourn for the Sins of the Land too. But he that will say, *Certainly these are Sinners, whom God aims at*, let him call for the *Ephod*, consult with God, as *David* did about the years of Famine. If an Oracle speaks to him, he may censure warrantably.

In pronouncing of Blessings, we may be more particular and personal, than in denouncing of Curses and Judgments on others. The very Language of Scripture leads us to this. The blessings from Mount *Gerazim* were to be spoken more fully, and with application; *Thus they shall bless the people*: but the Curses from Mount *Ebal* were not so home, but in a more suspensive way; not thus, *Curse the people*; but thus, *They shall Curse.* The Jews observe, that *Gerazim* stood Southward, *ad dextram mundi*; *Ebal* Northward, *ad sinistram mundi*; the motion of the right-hand is more quick and active. And the Cursing Tribes on *Ebal* were the Sons of the Hand-maids; the Tribes on *Gerazim*, were the Sons of the Free-woman. Right-bred Christians desire to bless rather. St. Paul sends blessings and Salutations personally; but his Curse is in general, and conditional only; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.* That Thunder-bolt hovers aloft in the Sky, seizes on no subject. That's a second, the manifestation of their Charity.

Sermon I. 3. A third ground of their Observation is, the Evidence of the things. There was a double hint in it.

(1.) The blessing was extraordinary, they could not but observe it. Thus God graces his Servants with remarkable Testimonies of his favour, that even Strangers and Enemies must see and confess it. *We see certainly* (saith *Abimelech* to *Isaac*) *that the Lord is with thee. I have learned by experience* (saith *Laban* to *Jacob*) *that Gods blessing goes with thee.* All men shall say, *This hath God done.*

(2.) The time and season was observable. His Prosperity began with his Piety; the blessing entered into his House, when the Ark entered. Thus *Haggai* (chap. ii.) dates the Prosperity of his people from the very Month and Day when their Piety began. *From the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Temple was layd, from this day will I bless you.*

And may not we thus Calculate, and cast the time of our Prosperity? From the day that God's Ark was settled amongst us, what Tokens of good hath God shewed upon us? that our Enemies have seen it, and been ashamed, and confessed, that God was amongst us. In the continued succession of three gracious Princes, the great Protectors of his Ark, and Worship, what extraordinary blessings have betided our Nation? What Treasons discovered, and disappointed? What Enemies repressed, and driven back again? What Peace in our Borders? What Plenty in our Palaces? even to the admiration and envy of Neighbouring Nations.

I pass to the

Second notice, the notice they give of it. *It was told King David.* And their purpose and intendment in acquainting the King with it, will briefly appear in these six particular Expressions.

1. They tell King *David* of it. *Speſtat ad pietatem Regis.* It shews us what Tidings were acceptable to the King. They knew it would be welcome News to hear *Obed-Edom*, and such as he, prosper. 'Tis sad News he sent by *Cushi* the Black-Moor; but every man springs forward to bring welcome Tidings.

Here is the pattern of a Religious Prince. And blessed be God we see it exemplified. Holy King, and happy Priesthood, whose welfare and prosperity the King delights in; that counts it the joy of his heart, and the honour of his Kingdom, to hear the servants of his God prosper under his Government.

2. They tell King *David* of it. *Speſtat ad scandalum Regis.* *Uzzah's* death had scandalized King *David*, made him shie, and afraid of the Ark of God. By these good Tidings they desire to put credit and honour upon Religion, to remove this scandal from the Ark of God, and to procure favour to it. 'Tis an argument of Piety to put an honourable report upon Religion, to speak well of the ways of God. 'Tis *opus Angeli remove ſcandala de regno Dei*, as *St. Bernard* truly: Especially not to cast jealousies into Princes Thoughts; as if Piety and Loyalty were things inconsistent; as if the Ark of God were some *Trojan Horse*, or some Engine of War, as once about *Jericho*.

How ready are prophane men, like the ten Spies, to raise an ill report of this Land of Promise, and to discourage the people? The Land consumes the inhabitants, the Ark mischiefs all that come near it; Religion undoes men. But the spirit of *Caleb* and *Joshua* speaks in these men, they endeavour to encourage King *David*; *O 'tis a good Land, the Ark brings a blessing with it, they all prosper that love it.*

3. They tell King *David* of it. *Speſtat ad potestatem Regis.* They knew the care of the Ark and Religion belonged to the King. The Cause of Religion, and of them that attend it, the Government and Inspection of them appertain to the King, as part of his Sovereignty.

Princes are not only Fathers of the Common-wealth; but Governours of the Church too. *Tibi commiſſi Sacerdotes meos.* His Authority extends to the ordering of the Clergy, and the Affairs of Religion. *Serviunt Reges Christo, Leges ferendo pro Christo.* To establish Religion as a Law; 'tis the Kings Prerogative. *Quis mente*

mente sobrius, Regibus dicat, Non ad vos pertinet curare, à quo curetur, aut oppugnetur Ecclesia; quis velit esse sive religiosus, sive sacrilegus? saith Saint Augustine.

The Business of Religion belongs to their Cognizance. Settling the Ark in Jerusalem must begin from the King. Hence we see all Alterations in the Church are ascribed to the Prince. In the Kingdom of Israel, the Priesthood and People were subservient to it; but the Authority of the Prince was the first mover in it.

Romam, aut Alexandriam, non Fabros, aut Architectos, sed Reges, quorum voluntate, consilio, imperio fabricatae sunt; condidisse dicimus; saith Saint Augustine. We say, not Masons and Carpenters, but Kings and Princes, are Builders of Cities; and so the Establishing of Churches, 'tis an act of Sovereignty, and Supreme Authority, though others labour in it. In this Case, the skill and ability of Clergy and People are all to be employed by this Architectonical and Supreme Power. Kings do that which Subjects do upon their appointment. As Benhadad writes to Ahab the King, *I have sent Naaman unto thee, that thou mayest cure him of his Leprosie.* How could he cure him? The Leprosie was not the King's-Evil, that Ahab could heal it. True, but Elisha the Prophet was the King's Subject, and what the Prophet could do, the King might command, and so he may do it. *Without thy word, no man shall lift up hand or foot in thy Kingdom;* 'tis the Royal Charter.

4. They tell King David of Obed-Edom's prosperity. *Spestat ad Votum Regis:* David had undertaken, and vowed the reducing of the Ark, and Fear had made him give over that Work, slack the performance of what he had promised. He was *reus voti*, his Vows were still upon him. See how sweetly and loyally they remind him of his Duty, woo and win him to the Discharge of his Vow by this insinuation.

Kings must be sought unto with submissive Entreaties, not encountered with bold and audacious Expostulations; not upbraided with their Oaths and Promises; much less threatened, and menaced, if they will not perform them. As the Secular Priests did threaten King James, if he would not give way to their Superstition, who knows what the forcible Weapon of Necessity may drive them to? Or, as Bellarmine wrote to him, *Si Rex Angliæ vitæ suæ consulere cupiat, sinat Catholicos frui Religione suâ;* or else he shall hear of them. O, *non est Religionis, cogere Religionem;* saith Tertullian. Religion makes no forcible entry; especially, not in Kings and Princes; breaks not in with threatnings upon them. Nay, irreverent reproofs are violations of Majesty. 'Tis as the sin of Uzzah (saith St. Hierom) that would stay up the Ark by an irreverent touch of it.

Nathan shews us the way how to call Kings to repentance. He caught King David's Conscience with a Parable; hides the Instrument that must lance the Sore. *Abscondit ferrum,* saith Chrysostom, *ne abborreret Medicinam; non sub vestimento, sed sub velamine narrationis:* Or, as Gregory expresseth it, *Ferrum, mollibus obvelatum, in locum purulentum scitè adest.*

5. They tell King David of Obed-Edom's prosperity by the Ark of God. *Spestat ad utilitatem Regis;* 'tis a faithful suggestion for the King's good, and prosperity. If there be a blessing to be had, 'tis reason the King should be sharer in it. The four Lepers of Samaria may teach us this Duty; when they discovered the rich Spoils of the Syrians, they presently resolve to give the King notice of it; *Come, let's go tell the King's Household of it,* 2 Kinz. vii. 9. Every man counts himself happy, that can be serviceable to his Sovereign's Welfare.

Here is a Project for King David's Prosperity: Let him pitch a Tabernacle for the Ark in Sion, establish, and countenance, and advance Religion, it will store him with blessings. 'Tis pity Obed-Edom should engross this Blessing. The Ark in his house, is like a mine of Gold in a private man's Ground, belongs to the Crown. Here is Treasure-trove in Obed-Edom's house; the King lays claim to it.

6. They acquaint the King with Obed-Edom's success. *Spestat ad felicitatem regni.* They desire this Blessing by the King, it may be improved for the publick good, that all may be sharers in it. They think it not sufficient to commend Obed-Edom for his Piety, or applaud his prosperity; but that all the Kingdom should

Sermon I. should imitate and equal him. They do not desire to cloister up Religion in Obed-Edom's house only.

With some, indeed, Piety is never in esteem ; but when 'tis a Rarity : Like Fashions, when they grow common, they are laid aside presently. There is too much Religion ; *Eldad and Medad*, and the Common-people should mind other matters, leave Religion to Obed-Edom, and a few Levites. Tully reproves the fondness of such men ; *Iniqui sunt, qui in re ed meliore, quod major est, mediocritatem desiderant*. Piety is never so glorious, as when 'tis spreading and universal. And St. Augustine upbraids it in the Romans, that admired *Regulus*, but took no care to have others prove like to him : *Quid facies iis hominibus, qui gloriantur se habere talem civem, qualem totam nolunt habere civitatem ?*

Religion in a Levite doth well ; but it concerns not the People. Let Churchmen mind the things of the Church.

Object. No, These men wish, that all the Lord's people should improve, and prosper in their piety.

Respon. And they take the right course for it. If the King honour, and advance Religion ; all others will embrace it. Naturally, a Loyal People delight in the Piety of their Prince, and Sovereign. When David kept a Fast, all the People took notice of it, and it pleased them ; as *whatsoever the King did, pleased all the people*, 2 Sam. iii. 36. And they are prone to imitate it. Kings to private Men, are as stamps to Coyns, as Seals and Prints to Paper : Piety in them begets the like in Millions that belong unto them ; they will presently receive Impression from him.

Religion from a King waters his Kingdom with Blessings, like a shower of Rain : From private men, 'tis like the watering of a Garden, or some spot of ground. If the Spring be high ; you may convey the Water to all places about it, far and near, in abundance.

'Tis the happiness of this Day we now Celebrate ; and we thankfully acknowledge it. We may take up David's Exultation in the Sixty eighth Psalm, the Psalm penned of purpose, when the Ark was removed, and placed in Jerusalem ; *We may bless God now in the Congregations, e fonte Israelis*, from the example of our King, the Fountain of Israel. God's House, and the Kings House are *conterminous*, built upon the same Hill of Sion. Our eyes see it, and give witness to it, and our hearts rejoyce in it.

Nay, the Ark of God this day had a new establishment. Indeed, it was not so much as shaken by the death of King James ; but continued steady without the least commotion. Moses went up the Hill, and Joshua came down to us ; and no fears and perplexities came betwixt, or cry in our Streets, only the Mourning of Love and Loyalty. *The Lord our God was still with us, and the joyful shout of a King was amongst us* : And the presence of God's Ark was again assured us.

This day, our King, like that Religious Emperour, set His Crown on the Bible. The initiation of His Reign, 'twas the continuation of Religion, the Coronation of the Gospel.

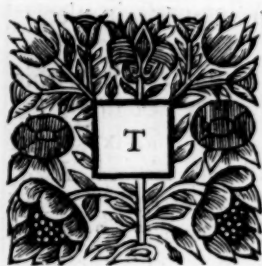
And long may we celebrate this His joyful Festival in our generations. *The LORD keep Him from the day of Trouble, the Name of the mighty God of Jacob preserve Him, send Him help from his Sanctuary, and strengthen Him out of Sion ; let the Ark of thy presence be always precious unto Him, and let the presence of that Ark evermore prosper Him. Save Him, Lord, and hear us, O King of Heaven, when we shall call upon thee. And that for Jesus Christ his sake ; To whom with thee, &c.*

On the Inauguration of King CHARLES the First.

The Second Sermon.

Haggai II. 23.

In that Day, saith the Lord of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my Servant, the Son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a Signet: For I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.



HIS Prophecy of *Haggai*, for the Date and Season of it, was directed to the Jews, soon after their return out of Captivity. And it contains a Mixture and Composition of Expostulations and Promises. The chief Expostulation is for the Peoples backwardness in building the Temple. Upon their Return home, they all fell to good Husbandry, set up their own Houses, plowed, and sowed their Lands, thought it not yet time to undertake so costly a Work, as building the Temple.

And, truly, Flesh and Blood would have thought this Delay excusable, if not reasonable: First, to get things about them, ere they set upon works of publick Magnificence. But, see, God accounts it matter of just exception; He looks to be first served, that his Glory and Worship have the precedency. *Provide first for me, saith Elijah, and then for thy self, and thy child afterwards, 1 Kings xvii. 13.* As soon as *Noah* came out of the Ark, his first care was to build an Altar: An Ark for Deliverance, and an Altar for Thankfulness, are the two first Structures that the Scripture tells us of. And 'tis observable, God commanded him to build an Ark; but his own Thankfulness moves him to build an Altar: And he doth it presently, pleads not necessity of preserving of store, stays not till the Creatures were more multiplyed; but takes of every clean Creature, that came out of the Ark, and offers them to God.

Some count it a Check given to *Jacob* for his backwardness, that God calls for his Vow (*Gen. xxxv. 1.*) *Go up to Beth-el, and there build an Altar.* God is fain to dispatch two Prophets to the Jews; first *Haggai*, he reproveth them for not building the Temple: When that was built, the Priests portion was detained, the Churches Patrimony must serve for other uses; then he sends *Malachy* to reprove that Sacrilege, and Robbery of God.

To bring on this Work more chearfully, He sweetens this Expostulation with many gracious Promises.

First, He promises the settlement, and advancement of Religion amongst them, the restoring and beautifying of his publick Worship; *I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts, Verse 7.* He will pitch his Tabernacle amongst them; He will beautifie his Sanctuary, and make the place of his Feet glorious. What Favour more precious, than for God to say to us, *Here I will dwell, for I have a delight in it?* Then, having settled Religion,

Secondly, He will make a Fence about it, to secure, and preserve it. That's his second Promise, a promise of Peace; *In this place will I give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts, Verse 9.* Peace, 'tis *antemurale Religionis*, it preserves Religion. War, and Contention, doth deface and ruin it. *Then had the Churches rest, and were edified, Acts ix. 31.* To have *Jerusalem* built in troublesome times, was but a sad prediction, *Dan. ix. 25.* The work went but slowly forward, when they built with

Serm. II.

one hand, and held a Weapon in the other; *Nehem. iv. 17.* Blows do not build up, but beat down the Church. When the Temple was set up, there was no noise of hammers heard; but when 'twas pulled down, they brake down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers; *Psal. lxxiv. 6.* His second promise then, 'tis most proper, and seasonable, of Peace, and Security.

Thirdly, Having given them Peace, he will furnish them with Plenty; that's a third Promise, *Their Vines, and their Corn, and their Olives*; He will bless them in all, *Verse 19.* Peace and Poverty they breed but cold comfort; but the conjunction of these two, to make peace in our borders, and withal, to fill us with the flower of Wheat, *Psal. cxliii.* These two are the great Ingredients to make up a compleat prosperity.

A Nation, thus blessed of God with piety, peace, plenty, may sing *Esay's* Song of his Vineyard. Here is,

- I. *Turris Religionis*, His Temple and Sanctuary set up amongst them.
- II. *Maceria pacis*, The wall and fence of peace and safety.
- III. *Torcular abundantiae*, The over-flowing of the Wine-press in plenty, and abundance.

Here is, *μυαγγισμὸς beneficiorum*; one Mercy encircled and compact within another, *ἀνὰ δὲν ἀγαθίδες*, bunches and clusters of Blessings. Here are not single Favours: but the meetings and kissings and embracings of Mercies, *Psal. lxxxv. 10.*

Now, were we our own chufers and carvers, we would all say, *Enough, Lord, enough, thou hast richly provided for us*: never proceed to *Esa's* cravings, *Hast thou not one blessing more for us*? But God sees there is one thing wanting to make up a full fruition of all these: And that's the blessing of Magistracy, and Government. There must be not only Religion, but a *Defensor Religionis*: not only peace, but a *Custos pacis*: not only a plenty, but a *Curator annonae*: Without which, neither Religion, peace, nor plenty will long continue, and prove lasting to us: And that's,

Fourthly, The fourth Promise, which my Text seals up to them, the Establishment of their Government, the setting and settling over them the Supreme Magistrate. *Zerubbabel* shall be magnified and honoured, and his Authority advanced amongst them. This Mercy, 'tis like the last work of the Creation. After God had framed the World, and stored it with his blessings, He brings in *Zerubbabel*, like *Adam*, to govern the World, to dress and keep this Garden of God. Thus *David*, surveying that great Workmanship of God's, *Psal. civ.* brings in Man as the accomplishment of all; and then breaks out into praise, and admiration, *Vers. 24.* O L O R D, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all: The whole World is full of thy riches. Piety and peace, and plenty, and all these protected by Sovereign Authority; *Happy are the people that be in such a case, Psal. cxliv. 15.*

The Text then, it acquaints us with God's gracious intendment to magnifie *Zerubbabel*, and to put honour upon him. And we may consider it in a threefold notion?

First, As a Prophecy.

Secondly, As a Promise.

Thirdly, As a Reward, assured to *Zerubbabel*.

First, 'Tis a Prophecy directed to *Zerubbabel*, acquainting him with the future events in the World, and what shall betide him, and his People under him. 'Tis the Priviledge of his Church, and chosen Ones; they have those *arcana imperii* made known unto them. The successions, and events of Ages, and Generations; the raising, and ruines of States, and Dominions: He disclosed them to his Prophets, and his choice Servants. His purpose to overthrow *Sodom*, and *Gomorrha*, he will not conceal it from his Servant *Abraham*, *Gen. xviii. 17.* *Joseph*, he is made acquainted with the future Condition of *Pharaoh* and *Egypt*. He foretels *Daniel* the great turnings, and changes in the World; the rising and falling of all the great Monarchies, that should sway on the Earth. That Universal Famine over all the World, under *Claudius Caesar*, not any of the Sages of the Empire foresaw it; but *Agabus*, a poor Prophet of *Jerusalem*, forewarns the Saints of it. 'Tis his Love

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to his Church to disclose his counsels, and purposes to them. *Daniel*, the beloved Prophet, and *John*, the beloved Apostle; their Prophecies foretell the Fates and Destinies of all Ages to come. Serm. II.

And as 'tis Love to them, so 'tis his Care for them, to settle, and support them against future Events. *These things have I told you*, (saith Christ) *that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them*; *John. xvi. 4.* Why? what comfort is in that? to hear afore-hand of trouble and affliction? Much no doubt; it prepares, and fits them for it. Sudden surprizals are much more uncomfortable than expected Events. It assures us that our sufferings are ordered by God, that they are not the Casualties of blind Fortune, or the Violence of unreasonable men; but the Holy Disposals of our Gracious God.

This Message to *Zerubbabel*, 'tis not only a Prophecy: But, Secondly, 'Tis a Promise also. And a Promise doth *Sonare in melius*, it betokens good to him. The Affairs of the *Jews*, at this time, were in a sad condition: their eyes beheld the miserable Decays, and the poor Repairs of their City and Temple; all their State was at a very low Ebb. Indeed now the Tide was turning: they were come out of Captivity; but yet things went so hard with them, such poor beginnings of their Church, and State; the Nations about them, all maligning, and hindring their work: that *Zerubbabel's* Heart might fail, and despair even to see himself, or his people in their former condition. To hold up his heart here, God seals up a promise to him; that he will not only support, but advance him, and put honour upon him.

In the poorest condition, the Church of God is rich in Promises: and he is not a poor man, that hath rich men to his Debtors; though destitute of present supplies, that hath Bonds, and Specialties, and good debts in abundance. *Who hath despised the day of small things?* *Zerubbabel* hath laid the Foundation, and he shall finish the Work: he shall see of the travel of his Soul, and the work of the LORD shall prosper in his hands.

And then the Text,

Thirdly, 'Tis *promissio de remuneratione*; 'tis a reward assured to *Zerubbabel*, for what he had done. He had been zealous for his God, for his Temple, and Worship: God doth not only accept it, but promises to reward it. *Quorum acceptator Deus, eorum & remunerator*, saith *Tertullian*. This kind of service is graciously accepted, and shall be fully rewarded. *Honorantes me honorabo*: He that advances God's honour, God will advance his. Doth *David* set himself to build God an House? God requites his good Intentions: I will build thee an house, saith God. What comfort, and confidence did this kind of service bring to *Nebemiah*? *I contended with the Rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken?* *Neh. xiii. 11.* He reproves the Sacrilege, and compels them to pay their Tythes to the Temple; and then his heart rejoices in it; *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds, that I have done for the house of my God, and for the Officers thereof.* *Lord, remember David and all his Afflictions*: What were they? his pains, and toils, and troubles, to support the Worship of his God; not only to do for his Church, but to suffer for it; *Remember Lord the affliction of David; and the sure mercies of David shall be performed to him.*

So then you see the Text, 'tis a Royal Charter made to *Zerubbabel*, the great Restorer of the Worship of God, and in it a Promise of his future advancement. Though, withal, I know the Text is by Expositors in a mystical sense understood of Christ; as *Augustine* saith well, that then we understand such Prophecies aright, and in their full extent, when we find Christ in them. He is the great anointed of the Lord, the true *Zerubbabel*; the Signet and Diadem, and the throne of *David* were preserved for him; His right it is, and to him it shall be given.

But this hinders not the literal, and more immediate intendment of it to *Zerubbabel*; nor the proportionable application to those, who are, as *Zerubbabel* was, the Captains and Rulers of God's People, and the Lord's Anointed. We take it in this sense; yet still referreing *τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτῷ Χριστῷ*, that he in all things may have the preheminance, who is the Blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; before whom *Zerubbabel*, and *David*, and all the Kings of the Earth, must

Serm. II. cast down their Crowns, and do homage to him. But under Him, and for Him, and by his concession, the Text is a Royal Charter made to *Zerubbabel*: and it stands upon these Particulars;

First, Here is the Time set, when this shall betide him, *in die illa*, in that day.

Secondly, The Person to be advanced, *Zerubbabel my servant, the Son of Shealtiel*.

Thirdly, The Author of this Advancement, and that is God, *I will take thee, and I will make thee, and I have chosen thee*; 'tis God, and God only. Then,

Fourthly, The Advancement it self, *I will make thee as a Signet*.

Fifthly, Here is the Ground and Reason, and withal the stability of this advancement, *For I have chosen thee*. And then,

Sixthly, and Lastly, Here is the ratification of this Promise, the great assurance of this advancement, 'tis *in verbo Regis*, 'tis sealed with the seal of the living God. Nay; it passes three Seals, the ratification is thrice repeated, to make it more firm: *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts*; and again, *saith the Lord*; and yet the third time he seals it with the Broad-seal of Heaven, *Saith the Lord of Hosts*.

First, *in die illa*; that's the first particular; the Time, and Date, when this Charter shall take place; and that's set down in the former *verse*: a day of overthrowing the Thrones, and Kingdoms of the Heathen, when the Chariots, and Horses, and Riders shall come down; nay, when Heaven and Earth shall be shaken, then, in that day shall *Zerubbabel* be exalted.

And this Circumstance hath a three-fold force in it;

I. It hath the force of a supposition; *Etsi*, Though all the world be in an uproar, and confusion, yet *Zerubbabel* shall be exalted.

II. It hath the force of a Condition; *Potius*, Rather than *Zerubbabel* shall not be exalted, all the Thrones of the Heathen shall be overturned.

III. It hath the force of a fixed Resolution, and Determination; *Quando*, When that day comes, that the Nations shall be visited, then *Zerubbabel* shall be remembered, his Throne shall be advanced.

I. Take it as a supposition; *Etsi*, though all the world be in an uproar, and confusion, in the greatest disturbances, *Zerubbabel* shall be safe, his throne established.

And this supposition, 'tis not meerly imaginary; 'Tis neither impossible, nor improbable, to see confusions and uproars in the World. We must not, *ἐννοῶν*, as St. Peter speaks, think it a strange thing, to see this lower Region full of storms and tempests, wars and rumours of wars, *Nation rising against Nation*. The raging of the Sea, and the noise of the Waves, and the madness of the People, the Psalmist puts them together: and that tells us the World is subject to Tumults, as the Sea is to Tempests. There are those *Venti Typhonici*, restless, and violent spirits, whose work is to take peace from the Earth, and to cast all into confusion.

Well, suppose all this: *Zerubbabel* in the worst times hath a Charter of safety. God's Church, and servants, and the defenders of them, are under a special protection. When God sends his Judgments into the World, he gives them a Charge, as David did to his Souldiers, concerning his son *Absolom*; *Entreat Zerubbabel well, let no man harm him, or do violence to him*.

Thus David brings in the World in a tumult, *Psal. ii. 1, 6. Why do the Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing? yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion; David, and the Son of David, are secured against them*.

The Psalmist delighted to put these Cases, to imagine the worst, and to strengthen his Faith against them; *Psal. xvi. 2. We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea*. In the greatest Earth-quakes his Throne shall stand fast. See the courage of his Faith in that unnatural Rebellion that *Absolom* raised against him, *Psal. iii. 6. He defies them all, be they never so many, I will not be afraid of ten thousands, that have set themselves against me*: nay, more than so, see the holy security of his Faith, in the midst of these dangers; *I laid me down, and slept, for the Lord sustained me*.

II. Conceive it as a Condition; *Potius*, Rather than *Zerubbabel* shall miscarry, he will overthrow, and tread down whatsoever shall oppose him: nay, more than so, to effect the welfare and prosperity of his Chosen, he will shake Hea-

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ven and Earth. The whole Creation is not too costly a piece to redeem them from adversity. Serm. II.

Zerubbabel's advancement met with strong oppositions. The Prophet *Zechary* compares them to an high Mountain. *What art thou, O thou great Mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a Plain, Zech. iv. 7.* He will level, and lay flat all oppositions, that are made against him.

God, as he is God of Nature, and Governour of the World, is merciful to all his Creatures, delights not in afflicting the sons of men: But when they come in comparison with, or stand in opposition to the welfare of his Church; they are all vile in his eyes. Rather than his *Zerubbabel* shall miscarry, he will part with all of them. Thus *Ezay* shews, how highly he values his chosen Ones, Chap. xliii. 3. *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Saba for thee; since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.* One *David*, one *Zerubbabel*, is more dear to God, than thousands of Aliens, that malign and oppose them.

III. This Clause hath the force of a fixed Resolution, and Determination: 'tis *Quando*; it sets down the time, when this promise to *Zerubbabel* shall be fully performed. And it hath three gradual Periods.

1. *In die adversitatis*; When all other Nations shall suffer adversity, then he will take care of *Zerubbabel*, preserve and prosper him. Usually, when he afflicts his Church, he suffers the men of this world to enjoy prosperity; and so on the contrary, when their day comes, he will remember his own, and do good unto them. The Sun of prosperity shines not at once upon both these Hemispheres. God sets a pillar of Cloud 'twixt his own and others; and 'tis usually dark to one, when 'tis light to the others. *The world shall rejoyce, and ye shall weep, saith Christ, John xvi. 20. but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and they shall lament.* *David* tells us, the time of the Churches adversity, 'tis but *till the pit be digged for the ungodly, Psal. xlv. 13.* The Ark then rises highest, when the World sinks lowest, and lies deepest under water.

2. *In die temporalis vindictæ*; When he shall revenge the oppressions of his Church upon their enemies, that will be the day of *Zerubbabel's* advancement. Remarkable vengeance on the Churches enemies, is usually accompanied with remarkable mercies to his own people. *St. Peter* observes it in these two great Judgments on the Old World, and *Sodom*. When he plagued them extraordinarily, withal he saved his own in a wonderful manner, and from thence concludes, *The Lord knows how to punish the one, and to preserve the other.* Indeed, his judgments to their enemies are mercies to his people. *He slew mighty Kings, Pharaoh, and Og, and Sihon: for his mercy endures for ever, Psal. cxxxvi.* Not only blessings upon themselves, but judgments upon their enemies, are mercies to his servants.

When one wicked man oppresses another, God will revenge it; but 'tis in wrath to the one, not in Mercy to the other; but the oppressions of his people are not only punished upon their foes, but withal recompensed, and requited with comfort to themselves. That's the second period; when the *Caldæans* shall be plagued, then *Zerubbabel* shall be exalted.

3. *In die extremi judicii*; that will be the great day of *Zerubbabel's* exaltation. This Promise reaches to that time; till then, it hath not its full accomplishment. All other his proceedings, they are *præjudicia extremi judicii*. He will plead the cause of his servants before; but then he will judge it, and fully justifie it. When all Thrones shall be cast down, then the Throne of *David* shall be exalted. *In that day, when he makes up his Jewels, Malach. iii. 17. then he will remember Zerubbabel, set him as a Signet on his right hand for ever.*

Indeed till then, neither *Zerubbabel* the Type, nor *Christ* prefigured by *Zerubbabel*, are in their full advancement. He is now upon his Throne, but his Foot-stool may seem in part to be wanting. *Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy Foot-stool, Psal. cx. i.* Then, when the great shaking of Heaven and Earth shall be; then *Christ* and his Vicegerents shall appear in glory.

I, this is the happiness of Christian Kingdoms: they shall not determine like others,

Serm. II. others in horror and confusion; but receive their full accomplishment in the Kingdom of Christ: *Diis minoribus in unum Jovem confusis*, as the Heathen man expresses it. When Pagans and Infidels shall be turned down to the Bar; true Christian Princes shall be taken up, as Assessors on the Bench. Here on earth they reigned for him, and at that day shall joyfully give up their Kingdoms to him. Here Christ reigns in them, there they shall reign in him, and with him.

I proceed,

Secondly, To the Person to whom this Charter is granted, that's *Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel*.

I. He is designed in his Person; and then,

II. Described by his Relation.

I. He is designed in his Person. Here is a personal compellation, God calls him by Name, directs a special message to him.

1. 'Tis honourable, thus to be owned of God by Name. *Zerubbabel*, and such as he, are his great Vicegerents upon earth; they are no strangers to him, they are the great Officers of this Kingdom; *De proximo noti*; their persons, their Names, all that belong to them, are precious unto him. They are like the great Constellations in Heaven, or Stars of the first magnitude; we have particular names for them, though the rest we heed not. And then,

2. 'Tis affectionate, 'tis the language of Love *φιλικὰ ὀνόμας ἐστὶ τὸ πικνύνειον*, to speak in these personal, and familiar expressions. *Chrysostom* saith, 'Tis a sign of displeasure, either not to speak at all, or, if one speak to one, yet not to own him, and call him by Name. *I know thee by name*, saith God to *Moses*, and thou hast found grace in my house, *Exod. xxxiii. 12. I have called thee by name, thou art mine*, saith God in *Esay*. And then,

3. 'Tis comfortable, especially in dangers, and distresses, when they beset us, thus sweetly and regardfully to be owned by Him. *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy Buckler, Gen. xv. 1.* Thus *David* encouraged himself in the Lord his God, *Thou hast known my soul in adversity, Psal. xxxi. 7. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, Esai. xli. 14. Be of good cheer, Paul*, said Christ to his persecuted Apostle, *Acts. xxiii. 11.* When *Jacob* was in distress, and begged, and wrestled for a Blessing, a Blessing was assured him by the imposition of his Name, *Thy Name shall be Israel, and thou shalt prevail*.

II. He is described by his Relation. God owns him for his Servant. And this is a Title of high Honour, and Dignity. Noble-men are more honourable in their Court-attendances, and Services, to their Sovereign, than in all their commands in their own Country.

King James, accounting those magnificent Titles, that the Scripture puts upon Kings and Princes, he glories in this, that they are styled by God himself, *Servi Domini*, the Lords Servants. *Bellarmino* flights it as common and vulgar, scorns him, as *Michal* did *David*, when he thus ministered before the Lord; but that gracious Prince, who knew full well what belonged to Honour, makes his boast of it

Indeed, however, in other respects, 'tis a Title communicable to every good Christian; yet by an *ἐξουσίᾳ* 'tis appropriated to those that are placed in Sovereign Authority. *Moses* my servant, and *David* my servant, and *Zerubbabel* my servant. A Title, in point of Magistracy, and Authority, given by God to those that are of immediate subordination to Himself, and supreme to all others. And 'tis Wisdom and Duty to preserve these Titles of Honour, to whom they are due. The style of Kings and Princes, 'tis like the holy Oyl of the Sanctuary, with which they are anointed; no Confection must be made like to it. *Veritas nomen*, 'tis *Salus proprietatum*; Titles given by God, are real Conveyances, and (with the Cardinals good leave) must not be placed upon inferiour Substitutes.

So then *Zerubbabel* is God's servant,

1. *Officio*. The great calling of Princes, 'tis an Office, and Service, that they perform to God. *St. Paul* styles them *Διακονοὶ* and *Λειτουργοὶ Θεοῦ*, God's Servants, and Ministers. Magistracy and Sovereignty, 'tis no intrusion, or usurpation, as *Korah* and his Complices would have had it esteemed; as if *Moses* and *Aaron* had lifted

lifted up themselves above their brethren. Were it an Usurpation, 'twere good to *Serm. II.*
 be rid of it; or, were it an Aberration from some better Order, 'twere fit to re-
 medy it; or, were it some provisional supply for a time only, it might estoons
 cease, and give place unto another. None of all these: 'tis an office of Prime
 and Original Institution. The Apostle calls it an *Ordinance of God*. David com-
 pares it to the *Ordinance of the Sun and Moon*: The Sun in the Original Tongue,
 'tis called a Servant; but yet a Servant to rule and govern, and give Light to
 the World.

Zerubbabel is God's Servant,

2. *Speciali functione*. The Service which *Zerubbabel* did perform, 'tis the great
 service, that's done to God above other employments. The building of the Tem-
 ple, the restoring of the Worship of God to its Native beauty; 'tis a work belongs
 to *Zerubbabel*, the principal service that God expects from him, and such as he
 is. The Jews have a saying, That the Keys of the Temple were laid every Night
 under *Solomon's* Pillow, they belonged to his Charge, they were not to hang at
 the High-Priest's Girdle. Then Kings do serve God, as Kings, saith *St. Augustine*,
 when they do that service, which none but Kings can do to him. *Servium Reges*
Christo, leges ferendo pro Christo. To establish Religion as a Law, 'tis the King's
 great Service: *Quis mente se brius, Regibus dicat, Non ad vos pertinet curare, à quo*
tueatur, aut oppugnetur Ecclesia; quis velit esse frue religiosus, frue sacrilegus? To main-
 tain and uphold Religion; to defend, and safeguard the Church from oppression,
 to see men be Religious, not to suffer them to be Sacrilegious; that's the great
 Service, that belongs to Kings.

Zerubbabel is God's Servant,

3. *Gratiosa acceptatione*. God graciously owns, and accepts his service; ap-
 proves his Fidelity, allows the discharge of his Trust committed to him. *Zerubbabel*
 met with those that questioned and quarrelled at his proceedings, as
Ezra reports of him. Well; let others malign him, here is his comfort, his God,
 whom he serves, respects, and accepts him.

'Tis the lot of these Servants, and Ministers of God, to be liable to the quar-
 rels of disaffected men. *Moses* met with contradictions; even his own Kindred,
Aaron, and *Miriam*, began to malign him. And *David*, though for a time, the
 People had loyal and honourable thoughts of him (*Whatsoever the King did, plea-*
sed all the People, 2 Sam. iii. 36.) yet Discontents arose against his Government.
Absalom could charge him with Neglect of his Kingly Office. Well; what said
 God of him? He approves his Service, commends his Fidelity. *He fed them*
with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with his Power; that's the
 Testimony God's Spirit gave of him, *Psal. lxxviii. 72*.

So *Solomon's* Government was complained of, as heavy and burthensom: And yet
 all the burthens we read of, were, that he laded the People with a surcharge of wealth.
 Those Levies and Taxes for the building of the Temple, and the Royal Palace,
 which some conceive the People complained of, were not imposed upon the *Is-*
raelites, but only upon Aliens, and Strangers, that lived amongst them; 2
Chron. ii. 18.

The Spirit, that's in us, lusteth to envy; and it shews it self no where more,
 than towards our Superiours. Oh, Brethren! We should consider their Temp-
 tations, and compassionate their Difficulties, and pity their Failings, and pray
 for their good Proceedings, and acknowledge the Blessings we enjoy by them.
 They may sometimes over-drip us, but they are a shelter to us. As *Fully* saith
 of the *Sicilians*, They enjoyed those benefits by the *Roman* Government, that
 they would not be quarrelling for petty grievances.

Zerubbabel is God's servant,

4. *Exclusivè*. His servant, and his servant only; no servant of others. This
 Interest of God cuts off all claim, that any other would lay to him, to have him
 their servant. The King's Authority, 'tis *αὐτῶν ἡ δόξα*, the Supreme Dignity,
ὅτι αὐτῶν ὁ δόξα, saith *Chrysostom*; it hath no Peer, much less Superiour. The
Signet in the Text, 'tis not *annulus Piscatoris*; 'tis neither *St. Peter's*, nor the Pope's
 Signet,

Serm. II. Signet. Dominion, 'tis the Image of God, not of the Pope. Indeed, when the Imperial Power turned Vassal to the Pope, the Scripture calls it *Imago Bestiæ*, the Image of the Beast : But lawful Sovereignty, 'tis a most legible Print of the Image of God, a derivation from him, and a substitution under him.

'Tis true, there is a serving in Government, and an hard service too ; which made *Fulgentius* utter that Speech ; *Facilius est Imperatoribus obedire, quam obedientibus imperare.* The Subjects part is the easier of the twain ; an easier matter to obey, than to rule and govern. And *St. Augustine*, considering the hard task of Government, confesses, *Magis propriè servus est, qui præest, quam qui subest.* And, if you will go further ; *Superiores do servire Utilitati*, but not *Potestati* : They are servants to the Good and Profit of their Inferiours, but not to their Power. Not like the Pope, that can hear his Canonists say, *Ecclesia data est Papæ* : The Church, 'tis the Pope's Demeasns ; meant, and intended for his profit only. *Gerson* reproves that Speech ; brings in the Church, telling the Pope, *Ego non sum tua, sed tu meus es : Omnia enim mea sunt.* The Church saith, she is not for the Pope ; but the Pope for the Church, and must seek the good of it. *Aquine* decides this Question, How Superiours may be said to be Servants. He is properly a Servant, that is so *& respectu principii*, *& respectu finis* ; that hath his employment from another, and for another. Now Sovereign Powers have their employment from God, and by his Authority, and so are his Servants only : But *respectu finis*, the End of their employment is to be beneficial, and serviceable to the good of others ; as *St. Augustine* expresses it, *Ecclesiæ utilitatibus servit, qui non tam præesse quam prodesse desiderat.* *St. Paul* doth fully resolve it, *Rom. xiii. 4. Dei minister est tuo bono.* They are God's Ministers for our good.

This Truth, that Princes are God's servants, 'tis *monitorium officii* ; the serious thought of this, will remind them of their Duty, so to govern, as with all to remember they are under Government. *Omne sub regno graviore regnum est.*

I know it is a preposterous Solecism to preach to the People the duty of Kings, and then to Kings the duty of their People. 'Twas the Pharisees method, and *pe do de la* too : when they find fault with Christ, they complain to his Disciples of him ; *Why does your Master eat with Publicans and Sinners ? Mark ii. 16.* There they accuse Christ to his Disciples ; and then anon, *Verse 18.* they accuse the Disciples to Christ ; *Why do not thy Disciples fast as well as others ?* Just the spirit of a Pharisee, to beget jealousies, and to sow Dissention ; tell the King, that his Subjects are false to him ; and then tell the People, the King usurps upon them. Sure this is not *ὁρδομεν*, to give every one his due portion. *Alia Medicina sanat calcaneum, alia medicina curat oculum*, saith *Gerson* ; every Truth is not for every person.

This, that Princes are God's servants, 'twill secure their persons, seals up to them a Patent of protection. The Master is bound in point of honour to safeguard his servant, and to keep him from wrong. King *David* pleads this priviledge, *Be surety for thy Servant for good, let not the proud oppress me, Psal. cxix. 122.* So King *Hezekiah* in his affliction, *Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* *David* prefixes this title in his Psalm of deliverance ; *A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, when he was delivered from all his Enemies.*

As it gives security to them, so it puts a restraint upon us ; it will bind us all to good observance ; nay, it will bridle our Tongues, that they offer not an unreverent word against them. *How durst you speak against my servant Moses ? Num. xii. 8.* A check, it was given by God, not to the common sort of Murmurers ; but to two, that were some-body amongst the people for Sanctity, and Authority ; to *Aaron*, and *Miriam*. And God, calling him his Servant, taught *Aaron* not to call him his fellow-servant ; but he learns *Κυριον*, he forthwith calls him, *My Lord Moses.*

So then, this description of *Zerubbabel*, *Zerubbabel my servant*, it points out unto us three excellencies in that Government God here institutes, and sets over his people.

First,

First, In his person : Here is Monarchy.

Secondly, In his birth and parentage : Here is Nobility.

Thirdly, In his descent : Here is lineal, and hereditary Succession in the Royal Family. Three great excellencies of Royal Sovereignty.

First, In his Person ; here is Monarchy, the Supreme Authority stated, and settled in one. Monarchy hath this prescription, and advantage, above all other forms of Government ; it carries a more evident stamp of Divine Institution, than any other. *Exemplum habet de cælo*, as Gregory speaks of Church Government. We condemn no other Forms ; they are not aberrations : But yet we justly magnifie and prefer the Model which God himself made for his own chosen people.

The Israelites had their Judges, but they were but occasional, and provisional : But the settlement of the State was to be in Kings. Indeed, their first King, *Saul*, was extorted by the people ; But that hinders not, but that the Royal Office was of prime intendment. It was promised to *Abraham* and *Sarah*, Gen. xvii. 16. *Kings of People shall be born of her*. The Royal Charter was drawn up by *Moses* long before *Saul's* time, Deut. xvii. *Moses* himself was a King in *Jesurun*, Deut. xxxiii. 5. That which blemish'd the setting up of *Saul*, was the Peoples over-hasty desire to enjoy a King. Both the *Sauls*, *Saul* the King, and *Saul* the Apostle, they were both ἐκ τέρματος, *born out of due time*, the one too soon, the other too late : But both their Functions of Divine Institution.

Secondly, Observe *Zerubbabel's* Birth, and Parentage : There is a second excellency in that : That is, his Nobility, the Son of *Shealtiel*, of the seed Royal. Nobility, 'tis not only a Dignity amongst men, but God takes notice of it, and puts honour upon it. 'Tis one of the old symptoms of the worst Times (*quæ tempora jam non instant, sed extant*, as *Bernard* speaks) when the Vile rise up against the Noble, and put contempt upon them, *Esaï*. iii. 5. *The Child shall behave himself proudly against the Ancient, and the Base against the Honourable*.

Especially, Nobility is the Quarry out of which God raises the Captain of his people : *Blessed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the son of Nobles*, Ecclef. x. 17. 'Twas *Queen Elizabeth's* answer to those that desired Her to acknowledge Her Successor, *Thronus meus est Thronus Regum ; nolim ut Vilis succedat mihi*. 'Twas the Philosophers precept, *τιναῖς ἀγῶν ἀρχεῖν* : and again, *Οἱ ἐυγενεῖς ἀξιοῦνται τιμῆς*. Nobility gives a great capacity for Rule, and Authority. 'Twas Gods curse on the *Philistines*, *A Bastard should rule over them*, Zech. ix. 6. The Philosopher saith, Men of place must not be taken ἐν σκυτάδῳ, not every shoe-buckle be made a Signet. *Tobias* the servant, is not a fit man to sway the Scepter ; Διὰ τὸ δαλοπρεπὲς τὸ σπέρματός, he is of too base an Alloy. *Jehoshaphat's* Thistle, 2 King. xiv. *Jotham's* Bramble, Judg. ix. *Abimelech*, the son of an hand-maid, not to be thought on for that high Dignity.

Thirdly, As God here establishes *Zerubbabel's* Monarchy, and raises it out of Nobility, so he settles it here in a constant Succession, makes it Hereditary. *Shealtiel* comes by a lineal descent from the Loins of *David*. St *Matthew*, and St. *Luke*, deduce *Zerubbabel* from that Royal pedigree. *David* calls this the establishment of his Throne ; *Thou hast spoken of thy servants house for a great while to come*, 2 Sam. vii. 19. God hath been careful to maintain this lineal descent ; Rather *Jehoshaphat*, a Child of seven years old, shall be placed in the Throne, than this succession be interrupted, 2 Chron. xxiv. 1.

'Twas that which troubled *Hezekiah* most, that, if he had died of his great sickness, he had left no heir of the Crown behind him. If *Coniah* die childless, yet reserve the Diadem for him whose right it is, to whom it belongs, Ezek. xxi. 27. 'Twas one exception they took against *Herod*, *Nec nascendo, nec vivendo meruit regnum* : He wanted both Birth and Breeding to make him a King.

This Hereditary Succession prevents those mischiefs which a *Vacuum* would bring upon a State and Kingdom. *Vacuum*, we know, will have strange operations ; it will make a clod of Earth, or lump of Lead, mount upwards, to fill a void place. Every body will be stepping into an empty Throne. When Kingdoms have become *hereditates caducæ*, as the Lawyers term them, the Pope hath been

Serm. II. ready to Escheat them to himself: That usurping King of Nations hath laid claim to them.

I pass to the

Third particular of the Text, the Author of Zerubbabel's advancement: and that's no other than God himself. *I will take thee, and I will make thee, and I have chosen thee.* He is the Fountain of all lawful Authority. *The Shields of the Earth belong unto God.* Sovereignty, 'tis a Beam of his Majesty. *Promotion comes neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from any point of the Compass:* 'tis God that sets up, and appoints Magistracy. 'Tis *Διοικητής*, an Image of God, that comes down from Heaven.

The Writ, by which they are made and authorized, it issues out from Heaven. Our Saviour tells us so, *John x. 34. It's written in your law, I said ye are Gods: He called them Gods, to whom the word of God came, saith our Saviour.* 'Tis he that makes them; we must have no Gods of our own making. The Oyl that anoints them, 'tis God's Oyl; *With mine holy Oyl have I anointed him, Psal. lxxxix.* The Throne they are placed upon, 'tis God's Throne, *1 Chron. xx. Solomon sat on the Throne of the Lord.* The judgment they execute, 'tis God's judgment, *Deut. i. 17.* The Kingdom they govern, 'tis God's Kingdom; *The Kingdom is God's, saith Daniel, and his to whom he will give it, Dan. iv. 25.* Hence is it that they are called the sons of God: *Ye are the sons of the most High.* Upon his Thigh is written, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. E femore descendunt,* that betokens their high descent, and dignity.

And this well considered, that Kings and Princes are authorized by God, will prove matter of comfort to us, that the Government we live under is of God's Institution. God will bless his own Ordinances. Man's Inventions be they never so wise, have no such Promises as Gods Institutions. They that set up *Abimelech* without this warrant, took a great content in him for a while; they rejoyced in *Abimelech*, and *Abimelech* rejoyced in them: but you know how little it lasted, and how sadly it ended. But if He set one over us, let us never question, or doubt, *how can this man save us? Gideon*, he suspected himself, and *Moses* before him shrunk at the burthen of being a Governour, but both of them prospered, because God authorized them.

We have seen the Author: Come we

Fourthly, to the Dignity, and Advancement it self, *I will make thee as a Signet; Ut Annulus signatorius:* He shall be to God as his Seal-ring. The expression 'tis symbolical. Literally in it self no great matter, as *Bernard*, in another case, *Annulus iste nihil valet, hæreditas est, quam expecto.* That which it betokens, and conveys, makes it so precious: *Materiam superabat opus;* the use exceeds the cost. And here it serves for a threefold purpose, it carries with it a threefold significancy;

First, *Annulus*, 'tis *insigne autoritatis*, 'tis the seal, and testimony, and conveyance of Authority. Investitures into chief Offices were given by a Ring. 'Tis *his ensign of Government*, an Ensign of Government. 'Twas the Ceremony of *Joseph's* advancement; *Pharash* took off his Ring, and put it on *Joseph's* hand, and made him Ruler over all the Land of Egypt, *Gen. xli. 42.* And *Alexander the Great*, designed his Successor by the delivery of his Ring, *Nisi cui competis ex officio.* *Tully* saith, *Sit annulus tuus non minister alienæ voluntatis, sed testis tuæ;* it betokens Command, and Authority.

So then, *Zerubbabel* is the Signet of God, hath the Impress and Signature of Supreme Authority. 'Twas the Royal Charter, *Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot, in the Land of Egypt.* All other subordinate Authority must pass this Seal, and be derived from it: as *Ambrose* saith of the Ring given to *Joseph*, *Annulus datur Josepho, ut ille alios signet.* All other Governours are sent by him, saith *St. Peter*; but the King is Supreme. Let the metal be what it will, without this signature, it carries no Authority.

Secondly, *Annulus*, 'tis *in ornatum*, Rings are for Ornament; the Robe and the Ring were brought out for Ornament, *Luke xv.* And such is the Magistrates Power, and Authority, 'tis the beauty of the Creation, the Lustre and Ornament of the great Workmanship of God. *He made the Sun to rule the day, the Moon and*

the Stars to rule by night. The splendour of those great Lights is the beauty of the *Serm. II.* Creatures; take them out of the World, and what remains but horror and confusion? See how God describes the beauty of his People, *Ezek. xvi. I deckt thee with Silver and Gold, and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a Kingdom.*

A due proportion of sovereignty and subjection, 'tis the beauty of the Body Politick: And as all good Government hath its comeliness, so the *Kingly* Government excels in Beauty. God's Providence shines more glorious in them. As 'tis for his glory to use the Ministry of Angels to govern the World, (those spiritual Thrones, and Dominions, and Powers, as the Scripture calls them) so it sets forth the Glory of his Kingdom, that he governs his Church and People by Kings and Princes. All thy Princes are Kings; 'twas spoke to the honour of the King of *Assyria, Isa. x.* They are his *anointed Cherubs, Ezek. xxviii.* as the greater Constellations in the Firmament of the World. *Solomon* reckons them amongst those goodly, and comely Creatures that he wondred at, *A King, against whom there is no rising up, Prov. xxx.*

There is yet a *Third* purpose of good to *Zerubbabel* in making a Signet.

Thirdly, 'Tis ob custodiam, it betokens care and custody; He will keep him, and hold him, and preserve him as a Signet. He shall be in his Eye and Remembrance, as is the Signet which a man wears about him. His great Vicegerents are like the Jewels of the Crown; they have a more special interest in his Care and Providence.

And this Care and Custody, the Scripture expresses by the keeping of a Signet; and it mentions three places, in which God sets, and keeps this Signet for the greater safety.

I. The first is *Dextra*; they are to him as *His signet on his right hand*; that's the usual manner of wearing of Signets. *How shall we magnifie Zerubbabel? saith the Son of Syrac: He was a Signet on the right hand. Custodia dextrae,* that's the more usual, and ordinary preservation of them. They always need it; the many casualities and crosses incidents into the life of man, Princes are liable to them, did not this Hand of the most High keep and defend them. He watches over them sleeping, and he guards them waking. Their going forth, and their coming in, in all the passages, and turnings of their Lives, his good hand must be over them. They are, *Viri dextrae*, as *David* accounts them, *Psal. lxxx. Let thy right hand be upon the man of thy right hand.* This *manu-tenentia divina* is that by which they are held, and supported.

II. But there are extraordinary Cases of Hazards; and they require more powerful preservations for them; he hath a stronger place to keep, and defend them, that's in *Brachio: Pone me ut sigillum in brachio, Cant. viii. 6.* He sets them as a Seal and Signet on his Arm. Besides the preservations of his *Hands*, He hath for his Anointed ones the Deliverances of His *Arm*, of His *strong Arm*, of His *outstretched Arm*, of His *Arm of salvation*, to shelter them from daily miscarriages. *David's* Faith makes God his House; that, we say, is a mans Castle, for his daily safety. *Be thou my Habitation whereto I may daily resort, Psal. lxxi. 3.* 'Tis he that makes *David dwell in safety, Psal. iv. 8.* But in days of trouble and distress, when the Blast of the terrible ones is as a Storm against a wall, then this Providence is not only an House to shelter him, but a Sanctuary to preserve him; then he entrenches himself within this more powerfull Divine Custody. *The LORD is my Rock, and my Fortrefs, and my Deliverer, my Strength, my Buckler, and the Horn of my salvation, and my high Tower, Psal. xviii. 2.* For ordinary preservations, *Let thy Hand be upon the man of thy right hand*; but in the days of great dangers, then, *Awake, awake, put on strength, thou Arm of the LORD:* then both His right hand, and His holy Arm must be stretched out for him.

III. There is yet a closer, and surer place for Custody; and that's in *Corde: Pone me ut sigillum in Corde: Set me as a Seal and Signet on thine Heart, Cant. viii. 6.* That implies *ἡ ἐμπόδιος τῆς ἀκαταστασίας*, much care and custody. *Cor,* 'tis *repositorium amoris*; the Heart, 'tis Love's Cabinet, where it keeps her Jewels; and Love is a sure

Serm. II and faithful Keeper. *Set me as a Seal upon thine heart; for Love is as strong as death, faith Solomon;* it will not part with that it loves. 'Tis that, which strengthens both Hand and Arm, and stretches them out for Zerubbabel's preservation. There is no snatching him out of His hands. Indeed he can slip off *Coniah* from his hand, and cast him away, *Jer. xxii. 24. Sed nemo eripiet;* non else can do it: much less can they wring him out of His Arm; but least of all can they pluck him from His Heart. The force of the Hands, and the folding of the Arms, they are both as fences to keep off violence from the heart: his hand shall hold him fast, and his Arm shall strengthen him, and his heart shall be as an hiding place, and Sanctuary to him.

And, to make this more sure, here is a sure Foundation laid for it in the Fifth particular of the Text; that's God's Choice and Election; *For I have chosen thee.* That's the first Original Cause. This Foundation of God remains sure, and hath this Seal, *Novit Dominus qui sunt sui, 2 Tim. ii. 19.* This Election, 'tis *signum signans*; the Advancement promised, 'tis *sigillum signatum*, 'tis but an impression of the first Seal.

This Election, 'tis like the great stone in *Jeremy*, that was to support *Nebuchadnezzar's* Throne; *Behold I will set his Throne upon this stone, that I have hid, and he shall spread his Royal Pavilion over it, Jer. xliii. 10.* 'Tis as the building upon the Rock; let the storms rise, and the winds blow, this Rock of Election will strongly support it. In that day, when there shall be a shaking of all other Kingdoms, this Foundation shall not be shaken, it will make *Zerubbabel's* Kingdom, *Βασιλείαν ἀπαύσθησαν*, as the Apostle speaks in allusion to this Prophecy.

So then, the Designment to this Government, 'tis *ex Electione*. *Zerubbabel* holds by this Title of God's Choice and Election; take it in these particulars.

1. 'Tis *ex Electione*; non *ex Permissione tantum*. Kings reign by God's Election, not by his permission only; that's too weak and sandy a Foundation. *Quod toleramus, non amamus;* faith *St. Augustine*. Permission falls short of Approbation. Kingdoms arise not *ex Fortuito concursu Atomorum*, as he thought the World did; they are not carried with an hurry, but by God's steady Election. *In regno Providentiæ nihil permittitur temeritati,* faith the Father. A careless Permission bears no sway in God's Administration. And *Luther* faith well, The Spirit of the Lord, that orders these affairs, 'tis *Spiritus consilii, & non temeritatis*. The appointment of Kings and Princes, 'tis an Act of Election, and purposed Choice of God; not a matter of his sufferance, and bare Permission.

2. This Advancement, 'tis *ex Electione*; then 'tis *cum Rejectione aliorum*. The Election of one, infer's the Rejection of others. *Prælatio unius sine Rejectione alterius non potest procedere.* God's Choice must stand: all other Competitours are clearly rejected. 'Twas this that transferred the Kingdom from *Saul*, *I have rejected him, 1 Sam. xvi. 1.* 'Twas the Election of God that advanced *David*, and set *Eliab* by; *Anoint him not; for the Lord hath refused him; Verse 7.* And as it refused *Eliab*, so it displaced *Adonijah*: though all *Israel* set their faces to him, that he should reign; yet the Kingdom was turned to *Solomon*: for it was his from the Lord, *1 Kings ii. 15. Electio obtinuit* holds here too. All others, be they what they will be, in parts, in power, in favour, ('tis not the Metal, but the engraving, and sculpture that makes the Signet) God's stamp of Election is wanting to them.

3. *Electio*; 'tis *ex Dilectione*. Election flows from Dilection; 'tis a fruit of Love. The Philosopher tells us, 'tis *ex amore finis*; the delight that God takes in the Prosperity of his People, sets Him on this course, to chuse a King over them. Should we presume to expostulate with God, as they did in *Malachy*, *Wherein hast thou loved us?* This is an ample and evident Conviction. We must be *evidentibus beneficiis ingrati*, as *St. Augustine* speaks, wretchedly unthankful, if we acknowledg it not a clear testimony of his Love, thus to provide for us.

See the acknowledgment that the Queen of *Sheba* made of *Israel's* happiness, *2 Chron. ix. 8. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee King over them, to do judgment and justice.* Should we deny this to be a fruit of his Love, this Queen of the South would rise up in judgment against us, her speech would condemn us. Indeed

Indeed this promise to *Zerubbabel*, 'tis a comprehensive mercy, in blessing Him *Serm. II.*
 God blesses the whole Nation. The Prince, he is an Head, a Fountain, a Root unto the People; all words of Influence, and conveyance. Life comes from the Head, Streams from the Fountain, Sap from the Root: an obstruction in these, brings destruction upon all. *Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will soon be scattered. Destroy the King of Israel, saith the Syrian: that's a quick way to ruin all.*

4. *Electio*, 'tis *cum deliberatione*. Election implies study, and search, and deliberation. We must conceive it *θεωρητικῶς*, leave out the imperfections of this act, and take all the perfections; that is, he doth it exactly, by the depth of his Wisdom, by the forecasts of his Counsel, with the fulness of his Resolution, all things considered. The appointing of Rulers over his People, 'tis with consultation. His making of a King, 'tis like *Faciamus hominem*, 'tis done *per modum consilii*, with a great consideration.

This work, 'tis one of the high points of State in God's Government of the World, none of the lower sort of actions: as if any that comes next to hand, might serve for this employment. God pitches on *Zerubbabel* as *Pharaoh* did on *Joseph*, he said to his servants, *Can we find such an one as this is? there is none like unto him*, Gen. xli. 38.

Thus we see, God makes search for a fit man to Govern, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, to be Captain over his People. He makes a Scrutiny among *Jesse's* sons, and then, after this search and scrutiny, he concludes, that he had found David his servant. I have provided me a King amongst *Jesse's* sons, 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

5. *Electio*, 'tis *personalis*: it fixes upon the person. *Electio*, 'tis *quorum*, not *qualium* only; 'tis not a bare Prescription of a Form, or a sanction of the Power only, but it is a designation of the Person also. I have chosen thee, saith the Text. *Te dicit, personam*. He doth not only institute the Office, and frame the Model, and stablish the Power, but singles out *Zerubbabel* for the man, to whom he commits it. God chuses not meer qualities, and forms, and notions, sets not up a *Platonical Idæa*: but invests the Person, makes that sacred. 'Tis one thing to distinguish in notion, another thing to divide in action, and reality, the Person and the Office.

And then,

Sixthly, For confirmation of all, he ratifies the Promise, *in verbo Regis*. He hath spoken it, and he will make it good. This Promise, 'tis not like a Papal grant: he will take upon him to give, and dispose Kingdoms, he will give the Title; but if they mean to enjoy it, they must fight for it themselves, look for no assistance from him: But the LORD of Hosts will make it good to him.

A glorious Title it is, and usual in the Prophets. But 'tis observable, those three which prophesied after the return from Captivity, *Haggai*, *Zechary*, and *Malachy*, when the State of the Jews was at the lowest, do most frequently use it, they scarcely ever name God but with this Title of Power, The LORD of Hosts.

When *Zerubbabel* and his people are at the weakest, then God offers himself, and his help at the fullest. This Title, it compasses him, as a Life-guard round about; it stands in the front of the Text, as in the fore-ward; and again, 'tis the closure of the Text, as in the rear-ward. We may say of the Text, as *Jacob* did, when the Angels of God (those heavenly Auxiliaries) met him, O, this is God's Host; and he called the name of the place *Mahanaim*. This *Cæleste satellitium*, these Chariots of Fire, and Horses of Fire, shall rescue *Zerubbabel* from those Chariots and Horses of the Heathen, in the foregoing Verse.

It speaks to *Zerubbabel*, as the Angel to *Joshua*, As a Captain of the LORD of Hosts, am I come to thee. And if he be with *Zerubbabel*, 'tis no matter how many of the Heathen be against him; as that brave Commander encouraged his Souldiers, when they saw his Enemies exceed them in number; Why? said he, for how many do you reckon me to be? This Name, through faith in this Name, shall discomfite them all.

For close of all:

Let us briefly *Μεταφυσικῶς ταῦτα*, as St. Paul speaks, transfer and apply this Text to our selves, and to the Blessings we enjoy, and which this day doth justly remind us of.

First,

Serm. II.

First, And it is our Comfort that we may do so, that we stand in such terms with God, that the Promises to his antient People may with good warrant be applied, and transferred to us. 'Tis not for every Nation to do it; but for the People of his Covenant, the Heirs of his Promises, the Israel of God.

Secondly, And is it not a blessing and Comfort, that we have a *Zerubbabel* to be Prince, and Captain, of this People of God? *Zerubbabel*, I say, that is, as some interpret the Name, A stranger to *Babel*; one that renounces all communion with that Romish *Babel*, and all her Abominations; or else, as others, A Fanner of *Babel*: And who, I trust, is preserved by God to fan out that Chaff from the good Wheat; that this Governour of *Judah* shall be to them as a Torch of fire in an heap of Chaff, and their Superstitions become as stubble before him.

Thirdly, Is it not a Blessing, that the Son of *Shealtiel* is a Prince over us; one of the Royal Race, that we have no stranger set over us; but a King over the Tribes of *Israel*? neither *Assur*, an Alien, as *Hosea* threatens; nor *Jeroboam* one of *Solomon's* servants: but the Son of Nobles, the Issue of Royal Progenitours, designed by God to that Royal Dignity, from the birth, from the womb, from the conception?

Fourthly, Is it not an high Favour vouchsafed us, that he is, and is owned by God for his Servant; and that not only *Potestate*, but *Pietate*; not only the High-Steward of God's Household, and so his Servant by Office, but the servant of his God in Piety and Devotion? And what a Mercy this is, we may consider, if we think of *David's* Imprecation; *Set an ungodly man to rule over them*; or that of *Hosea*, *Regem dedi irâ meâ*; or the Prophet *Esay's* Commination, *A Leopard shall watch over their Cities*.

Brethren, Let's know and acknowledge our happiness. We have not *Pharaoh* to our King, that knows not the Lord, nor cares to know him; but one that religiously knows him, and is known of him.

'Tis no excessive question, that I shall propound to you; Did *England* ever know a Prince more frequent, more constant, more attentive and devout in the Worship of God? We commend it in private persons, and 'tis justly commendable; how much more in a King? To keep his constant times for Prayer, to bring his Children daily to the Worship of God; to teach them betimes to know the God of their Father.

He is his Servant; and those gracious claims, that God makes to his choicest servants, I doubt not, but in a most just proportion belong unto him.

I. *Servus, quem elegi*: He is his chosen Servant.

II. *Servus, in quo complacui*: In whom he takes delight, to do good unto him.

III. *Servus, quem sustento*: His servant, whom his hand upholdeth.

IV. *Servus, & filius ancillæ*; He is thy servant, and the Son of thine handmaid; a true member of his true Church. And,

V. Lastly, *Servus, in quo glorificabor*, whom he will delight in, as in a blessed Instrument of his glory;

Fifthly, This servant of his, he hath made him as a Signet, and the stamp and Signature of God is engraven upon him.

Clemens Alexandrinus forbids four sorts of Characters to be set upon a Signet, as mis-boding Characters, and of ill construction. None of them all are to be seen upon this Royal Signet; but the contrary Characters are evident in him.

I. *Οὐκ εἰδωλὸν πρόσωπον*. He forbids the figure, and stamp of an Idol. Our *Zerubbabel* hath the quite contrary character, that's the signature of his Piety. He neither knows, nor names, nor worships any other God, but the God of *Israel*.

II. *Οὐδὲ ξιφῶς, ἢ πύξον*. He forbids the engraving of the Instruments of Cruelty. Our *Zerubbabel* hath no such Character; he bears upon him the Signature of Clemency. And Clemency, 'tis a Royal vertue. Indeed Kings must sing to God both of Mercy and Judgment; but the sweet Song, is the Song of Mercy. *Do justice, and love Mercy*; saith the Prophet *Micah*. He doth not only do it, but loves it, and delights in it.

III. *Ὁὐ*

III. *Οὐ κύνελλα τοῖς σαρκοῦσιν.* That's the third Character he forbids; he would have no Emblem of intemperance engraven upon it. And doth not this Signet, we are now beholding, bear the quite contrary impressi^on, the Signature of Sobriety? Is not this a confessed vertue eminently in him; he hath thoroughly learned King Lemuel's lesson, that his Mother taught him, *'Tis not for Kings to drink Wine, nor for Princes stranz drink.* He is free from that sickness, that the Prophet Hosea complains the Kings of Israel were subject to; *Morbo efficiuntur ex utre vini;* he eats and drinks for strength, and not for intemperance.

IV. *Οὐ τὰς ἐπιείκας.* Clemens forbids any lascivious, or wanton impressi^on, no stamp of Uncleaness. He bears upon him the Signature of Chastity. Whose Bed hath he defiled? Whose Chastity hath he assaulted? Whose Virgin hath he deflowred? *Regium est, ità vivere,* saith the Orator, *ut non modò homini nemini, sed ut nè libidini ulli servias:* 'tis more true in him.

Bishop Latimer presented a Great Person in his time with an Handkerchief, wrought about with this inscription, *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* The former part of the verse may be the Posie of this Royal Signet, *Marriage is honourable, and the Bed undefiled.*

Survey the World, and see how many such Princes your thoughts are able to present unto you. May not their Names be writ *in pala annuli,* within a small compass? Brethren, we may boast of God's Mercy, and it becomes us to do it. *Christendom* cannot shew such another Signet.

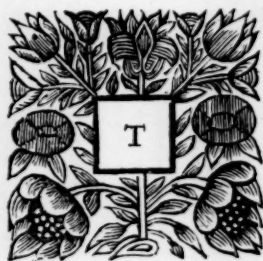
The LORD set him as a Signet on his Arm, and as a Seal upon his Heart; He sanctifie his Soul, and comfort his Heart, protect his Person, prosper his Government, knit the hearts of his People unto him in all love and loyalty, and his heart unto them in all tenderness and compassion: That so a Gracious King, and a Loyal People, may long, and long enjoy each other, to their mutual comfort. Grant this, good LORD, for the glory of thy Name, and for the merits of thy Son, and in much mercy to this Nation; and even for his sake who came to slay Enmity, and to establish Peace, Jesus Christ, our blessed Peace-maker. To whom with thee, &c.

THREE
 SERMONS
 OF THE
 Gunpowder Treason,
 PREACHED
 Upon the Fifth of NOVEMBER.

The First Sermon.

Daniel VI. 21, 22.

*Then said Daniel unto the King, O King, live for ever.
 My God hath sent his Angel, and hath shut the Lions Mouths, that they
 have not hurt me: Forasmuch as before him innocency was found in
 me; and also before thee, O King, have I done no hurt.*



HIS Chapter upon a Summary View represents, and relates unto us, a malicious Conspiracy, and a miraculous Delivery. The prosperity and honour of holy *Daniel* was envied by the *Babylonian* Princes: Their envy stirs them up to seek his ruine. Nothing but his Death can satisfy them. They consult, contrive, effect their purpose: The Prophet is ensnared, condemned, cast into the Mouth, and Jaws of Death; and out of them doth the Hand of God gloriously rescue him.

And then, the Words I have read unto you, they are *Daniel's* religious and thankful acknowledgment of this his deliverance. And this his acknowledgment is directed to King *Darius*, by whom he was condemned, and cast into this danger of destruction. And it stands upon three Particulars.

First, Here is a reverend Compellation: *O King!*

Secondly, Here is a loyal Salutation: *Live for ever.*

Thirdly, Here is a thankful Declaration of his delivery: *My God hath sent his Angel, &c.*

First, Here is a reverend Compellation; *O King.* He acknowledges *Darius*, and honours him as his King, professes his loyalty, and subjection to him. And the fulness and weight of this homage, and duty of *Daniel*, will appear more remarkable, if we take a particular view of *Darius*, chiefly in these four Considerations.

First, *Darius* he was *Ethnicus*, an Heathen Prince, an Alien from the People of God, an utter stranger to the Church and Common-wealth of *Israel*: And yet he

he is acknowledged, and honoured by this Prophet, as his King. 'Tis worth the noting ; it affords this Observation ; That *Religion doth not exempt us from the Authority, and Power of Magistrates, and Rulers ; though they be Infidels, and Heathens, and Strangers to Religion.* The Ties, and Bonds of duty, and subjection to them, are sacred, and inviolable. Dominion and Sovereignty are the Ordinances of God, not as he is the Author of Grace, and Redeemer of his Church ; but as he is the Author of Mankind, and Governour of the World. 'Tis a true Maxime in Divinity, *Dominium temporale non fundatur in Gratia* ; Supernatural Grace is not that which constitutes Kingdoms : and so the Calling, and Authority of Magistrates, is not a Mystery of the Gospel ; but an appointment of God, by his Universal Providence. The Duty of Children to Parents, of Servants to Masters, of Subjects to Princes, is not a Consequence of Christianity ; but a Principle of Nature, and unalterable by Religion. A Christian Child cannot abandon his Duty to his Parents, though they be Heathen, or Infidels ; a Christian Servant cannot shake off the Yoke of Servitude, because his Master is an Unbeliever, *1 Tim. vi. 1. Let as many Servants as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all honour.* Christian Subjects cannot deny their Allegiance, and subjection to their lawful Sovereign, though Heathen, and Infidels. Thus Christ acknowledges subjection to Pilate, and that his Power over him was from Heaven ; *John xix. 11.* Thus Paul appeals to Cæsar ; as being obnoxious to his Power, and Tribunal, owns him as his King. This made Christ and Peter pay Tribute to Cæsar. The Papists, especially their Canonists, they wickedly teach, that Heathen Kings have no power over Christians ; but that the Gospel frees them from that subjection. Daniel, and Jeremy, and Ezekiel, Christ, and Paul, and Peter, and all Primitive Christians abhorred this Doctrine, and honoured Heathen Princes, as their rightful Sovereigns. That's the First ; *Darius Ethnicus.*

Secondly, *Darius* comes under another Consideration : He was *Ecclesiæ inimicus*. Not only an Alien, but an Enemy : one, that kept the Church, and People of God in Bondage, and Captivity, used them not only as subjects, but as slaves, enthralled them to his Tyranny ; yet still acknowledged, and honoured by the Prophet, as their Rightful Sovereign. Subjection and Fidelity is due from Christians to Kings, and Princes, though they prove Oppressors of the Church. The Prophet Jeremy exhorts the Jews to take up the Yoke of the King of Babylon, and to submit to him, to study the Peace of his Government, and to pray for him. The People of God lived in subjection to the Roman Empire, though it were Tyrannous over them. St. Paul exhorts Christians to Obedience to Kings, and Princes, even when they were Persecutors. The primitive Saints obeyed many Emperours, that spilt the Blood of Christians. They submitted to Julian that hateful Apostate. Saint Peter requires subjection, not only to the good, and gentle ; but to froward Governours. Papists teach, that Kings, if they prove Oppressors, may by the Pope be deposed, uncrowned, murdered. No : The Army of Martyrs obeyed even to death ; they rose not in Rebellion. *Apud nos tutius est occidi, quàm occidere*, saith Tertullian. Christians had rather be murdered, than murder : And he tells the Heathen, that the Christians in his time were able to wage War against Emperours, that destroyed, and havocked them : But that Conscience, and Christianity enforced Obedience. That's the Second ; *Darius Ecclesiæ Inimicus.*

Thirdly, *Darius* was *Impulsor ad Idolatriam*. He makes here a wicked Law, forbidding Religion, and enforcing to Idolatry, assumes all Religious Worship to himself ; yet the Prophet acknowledges, and honours him, as his King, and Sovereign. Observe, *Religion requires subjection even to those Kings that deface the Worship of God, and would compel to Idolatry.* Active, and actual Obedience to ungodly Laws we may not, we must not yield, and perform. Thus to submit to man, were to rebel against God : But yet protestation of subjection must continue, though our particular active obedience be denied and restrained. *Legibus bonis emendantur mali, & legibus malis probantur boni*, saith St. Augustine. Good Laws of Princes must amend us, when we are bad ; and their evil Laws must

Serm. I. must try, and prove our Constancy in Religion, in those that are Good. *Saul's* servants were good Subjects to him, though at his Command they would not murder the Priests of God. Then, though we dare not perform our active obedience, in doing what they command; yet we must perform our passive obedience, in submitting to their punishments. *Daniel* dares not obey the King, forbidding him to pray; but yet he obeys, commanding him to die. Papists teach, that Heretical Kings forfeit their Crowns and Lives, if they command against God. No: we must here with *Daniel*, honour their Persons and Calling; when Conscience forbids us to fulfil their Commandment. That's a *Third*; *Darius Impulso ad Idololatriam*.

Fourthly, *Darius* was now *Autor periculi*; he was the Author and Commander of *Daniel's* destruction; his Law ensnared him, his Power condemned him, his Seal shut him up in the Den of Lions: Yet for all this, this holy Prophet honours him as his King. Observe, *No wrong, or injury, can exempt or discharge our persons from our lawful Sovereign*. The *Hebrews*, havock'd by *Pharaoh*, rebelled not. *David*, pursued by King *Saul*, opposed not, conspired not against him. *Jeremy*, persecuted by *Zedekias*, revolts not. I; this is thanks-worthy with God, if we be wronged, not to mutiny and repine, not to revile or oppose; but to suffer as Christians in meekness, and patience: Private wrongs may have redresses; but Magistrates, armed with Authority, if they prove heavy and injurious; they must be proofs of our Patience, not provocations of our Revenge.

Tantum de Compellatione.

Secondly, Follows his loyal, and pious Salutation; *Live for ever*. He prays for him, wishes him both length, and prosperity of life here, and eternity of life, and felicity hereafter.

I. He upbraids not the King with Tyranny, and Impiety; charges him not with the cruelty of his usage.

II. Threatens him not Vengeance, and Judgments from God, much less as a Prophet, doth he denounce sentence of Deprivation against him, as the Pope did against King *Henry*, for the death of *Becket*, a rebellious Priest: but, forgetting his wrongs, forgiving his persecutions, he sends up a devout prayer for his life and welfare. Here is the patience, and piety of the Saints; being cursed, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it, *1 Cor. iv. 11. Bless them that persecute you. Bless, I say, and curse not*: *Rom. xii. 14. This is not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good*, verse 21. This approves us Christians, *In much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, and imprisonment*, *1 Cor. iv. 11*. Especially the Gospel, that turns just Revenge into Prayers and Blessings. The Law was more direful, and severe; *Elias* he calls for Fire from Heaven upon his persecutors. Christians must be of another spirit. The Spirit of the Gospel is a Spirit of Meekness, and Goodness, and Gentleness. Oh now! cursing, and blood, and slaughter, they are the fruits of a Malignant Church; marks of the worshippers of the Red Dragon. The Followers of the Lamb must be like the Lamb, must be meek, and harmless. *Zechary*, the son of *Jehojada*, out of the Spirit of the Law, being stoned, calls for vengeance, *The Lord look upon it, and require it*, *2 Chron. xxiv. 22*. But *Steven*, out of the Spirit of the Gospel, being stoned, prays for his Murderers, *Lord lay it not to their charge*, *Act. vii. 60*. So the Apostles, being threatned, (*Act. iv. 21*.) do not imprecate, but beg assistance, and Gods hand to be stretched out, not to plague their enemies, but to heal, and to work helpful, and beneficial Miracles. How unlike are Papists! Not a Canon broken, not a Priest punished, not a Privilege impeach'd, not an Insolency repressed, but presently come forth Thunderings of Curses, and Slaughters, and Treasons, *Aut hoc non est Evangelium, aut isti non sunt Evangelici*.

Then, *Orat pro Rege*. He will not pray to the King: but he ceases not to pray for the King. *Colimus Imperatorem sic, quomodo & nobis licet, & ipsi expedit; ut hominem a Deo secundum, & quicquid est Deo consecutum, solo Deo minorem: hoc & ipse volet; sic enim omnibus major est, dum solo vero Deo minor est*. *Tertull. ad Scapulam*. Here is the tryal of *Daniel's* Allegiance. Oh! he worships a prohibited God

God, adores not the King: He is a factious, seditious man, not worthy to live! Thus they account of him. He is against the Kings honour. Vain men! Which are the better Subjects, they that pray for the King, or they that pray to him? In such impious commands Christians do obey the King, when they disobey him; they seek his Welfare, when they will not flatter him. *Saul's Subjects* loved him more that would not slay the Priests of God, than *Doeg*, that did it. The *Jews*, that made *Herod* a God, in their flattering Acclamation, they were Traitors to him, and hastened his death: they were so far from honouring him, that they ruined, and destroyed him. *Honorandus est Rex, non pro Deo, sed propter Deum.* He rightly honours the King, that accounts him the Great Minister of God, and so prays for him: not he, that will make him a God, and pray to him. *Verè magnus est, quia solo Deo minor.* Therefore he is great, because next under God. Thus the primitive Christians, refusing to burn Incense to Emperours, or to swear by their *Genius*, did pray for their Armies, and Empire, for their life, and tranquillity.

Thirdly, Follows his thankful Declaration of his marvellous deliverance. It stands upon five particulars;

First, He sets out the Author of his deliverance; *My God.*

Secondly, The Instrument of it; *Hath sent his Angel.*

Thirdly, The Manner of it; *Hath shut the Lyons Mouths.*

Fourthly, The Measure of this deliverance; *That they have not hurt me.*

Fifthly, The Motive, that God graciously looked on; not a meritorious Motive, exacting it of his Justice; but an impetratory Motive, obtaining it of his goodness; and that is *Daniel's* Piety, in two expressions.

I. Was the Innocency of his Person; *For as much as before him innocency was found in me.*

II. Is the Innocency of his Cause; *And before thee, O King, have I done no hurt.*

Thus *Daniel* purposely sets out all the course of his rescue, as it were in opposition to the malice of his Enemies.

1. His Enemies have engaged the King against him; but his piety, and innocency hath engaged God for him.

2. Their Flattery hath engrossed the King to their purposes: he is theirs wholly, *Daniel* is excluded. See, his Faith hath appropriated the King of Heaven to him; *My God hath rescued me.*

3. They have combined, the Princes, and Nobles, and Captains, against him: He hath the Peers of Heaven, the Armies of Angels, those mighty Spirits, they come to rescue him.

4. They have sealed him up into the Den, that the Lyons may devour him; these Helps have sealed up the mouths of the Lyons that they cannot hurt him.

First, Come we to the Author; *My God*: and in it are two things:

I. Is his helper; that's God.

II. Is his Hold, that he lays upon this Helper, for his rescue, and delivery; that's in this word, *Meus, My God.*

I. God, he is his Helper. Indeed all deliverances, especially of his Church, and Children, are the Works of God. The Help, that is done upon earth, he doth it himself; *Psal. lxxiv. He is the God of Salvation, unto him belong the issues from death, Psal. lxxviii. 20.* Especially here God is the Helper, and the only Helper, and that in three Respects, in three Exigencies, in which he will be seen;

1. *Contra tantum inimicum*: Against so great an Enemy.

2. *Pro tantillo*: For so forsaken and helpless a man.

3. *A tanto periculo*: He alone can help out of such danger.

1. God must be the Helper *contra tantum inimicum*. Against the power of a King there's no rescue, but by God. *Who can say to the King, What dost thou? saith Solomon.* No man can disarm the strong man, and spoil him; but only he that is stronger. Against private or tumultuary violence, other helps may come in; but when Magistrates, armed with Authority, oppress, that's *Casus reservatus*; then 'tis time, *Lord, for thee, to lay to thine hand*: none but the King of Kings can control them. *Saint Ambrose*, and so *Saint Basil*, and *Chrysostome*, when the people

Serm. I.

would have rescued them, from the Emperours hard usage of them, they all three forbade it. 'Tis he only that is terrible to the Kings of the Earth.

2. *Pro tantillo*; that's a second Exigent. 'Tis God alone, that can rescue him now. Daniel is thrust out of the Protection of the King; no Mediation, or Intercession is made for him; all urge, and press the Law against him; now he is a poor, destitute, forsaken man. That is another *Casus reservatus*. The delivery of such an one, is Gods peculiar Work. 'Twas sometimes David's Case, Psal. cxlii. 4. *I looked upon my right hand, and beheld; but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my Soul: then he adds, Verse 5. I cryed unto thee, O LORD, I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living, — deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Thou art the helper of the helpless.* 'Twas St. Paul's Case before Nero, no man stood with him, all men forsook him; but the Lord was with me, I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lyon, 2 Tim. iv. 17.

3. *Atanto periculo*; that's a third Exigent. None, but God, can rescue, now that Daniel is in the very Jaws of death. The King himself, would he never so fain, cannot now deliver him, now he is in the very Confines of destruction. The Prophet's condition, for any humane help, is become desperate. This is a third *Casus reservatus*. 'Tis Gods high Prerogative to save in extremity, to take out of the Jaws of death, to pluck us out of the pit's brink, nay, from the pit's bottom. Thus Paul magnifies his deliverance: *We were pressed out of measure, above strength; so, that we despaired of life: and then God delivered me from so great a death,* 2 Cor. i. 8, 10. David out of the depths: Jonas out of the Whale's belly: the three Children out of the fiery Furnace: these are all *Casus reservati*, all proper to that God, which is the God of deliverance, that works salvation in the midst of the earth. In the Mountain will the Lord be seen; so here in the dungeon was the Lord seen.

II. See his hold he lays on this help; *My God*. 'Tis not sufficient to see help at hand, if we lay not hold upon it. *Lay hold upon my strength*, saith God in *Esay*. So here doth Daniel's Faith clasp close upon God. At all times our Faith must rely upon him. *Who is this, that cometh leaning upon her Beloved?* 'Tis the Churches description, *Cant. viii. 5.* But in Dangers, Fears, Temptations, then Faith embraces, clasps about him. Here is not only *contactus*; but *complexus fidei*. As Jacob, being in fear of *Esau*, would not let go his hold. O, 'tis good then to draw neer to God; no nearness is close enough, no approach too immediate.

For further expression, we may resolve this word of interest, and relation, *Meus*, into these particulars;

1. He is *Meus*, My God, *ex appropriatione cultus*; *My God*, by special service, and Religion; the God of my faith, and piety, and devotion. Nature discovers a God, and infidelity will allow him us, as *Darius* doth here to *Daniel*, *Thy God*, in the former Verse; justles him off to *Daniel*. Others are strangers to him; only Religion makes him our God; it sets him up in our souls, ties the heart, and conscience to him. This gives us good hopes of deliverance, when we make God our own. Stick to him, and he will stand to us. Alas! most deal with God in their dangers, as the *Israelites* did in their distresses, send to hire the King of *Egypt*, or *Syria*, to help at a pinch: No, we may expect him our helper, if we truly make him our own God.

2. *Meus*, My God, by publick profession, and open adoration. He glories and boasts himself in his God. Now, when he was forbidden to name any God, but an Idol; now, when Gods name, and worship, was a reproach unto him, nay, death, and destruction: yet then *Daniel* owns him, professes him. *I will speak of thy Testimonies, even before Kings, and not be ashamed*, saith *David*. *Daniel* shrinks not from him, and therefore now God owns him again. *They that confess me, I will confess them. He is not ashamed to be called their God*, as the Apostle speaks. If we stand to God, when he needs us, and maintain his honour, he will stand to us, maintain our cause. Alas! we fail God, and so 'tis just God should fail us.

3. *Meus*, my God, by special trust and affiance. Indeed this word, *Meus*, *Mine*, 'tis Faith's possessive. Common-Faith looks upon God in a general notion; but
a true

a true saving Faith brings him home to us by nearest application. *He loved me, and gave himself for me*, saith St. Paul. Faith, 'tis never kindly, and proper, till it comes to this, to make God our own, to work our selves into a full possession of him. *My well-Beloved is mine, and I am his.* *Dicat anima, secunda dicat, Deus meus es Tu ei, qui dicit animæ, Salus Tua sum Ego;* Aug. Let us say to him, *Thou art my God*, and he will say to us, *I am thy Salvation.*

4. *My God*, by present evidence, and experience in this glorious deliverance. Now he hath avouched himself to be his God, by this gracious rescue. As he saith, *he will make himself known to be Jehovah*, when he frees them from Egypt. See, now he is called *the God of Daniel*, ver. 29. Men must tremble, and fear before the God of Daniel. So chap. iii. 20. He is proclaimed by *Nebuchadnezzar, The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, when he delivered them out of the fiery Furnace. As we make known our selves to be his People by special Service; so extraordinary Mercies do endear God more to us, strengthen our relations. *I am thy God that brought thee out of Bondage.* By such deliverances, God gains new right in us, possesses us upon more Titles, when he saves, and delivers us. Thus he will be owned by his people, *you shall say, The Lord lives, not that brought us out of Egypt only: But that brought us out of the North-Country, from the Captivity of Babylon.*

5. *Meus*, by resolution, and engagements of holy thankfulness. This deliverance is a dear obligation to Daniel, now he renews his Covenants: As, after their return out of Captivity, they entered into a new Covenant, to be the Lords people. Thus David expresses his, and his people's thankfulness: *This God shall be our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide unto death.* And yet again, Ps. cxvi. 16. *O LORD, truly I am thy servant, I am thy Servant, and the son of thine hand-maid, thou hast loosed my Bands.* In particular freedoms from any danger, or sickness, hath God given thee thy life, saved it from the pit? Oh! return it unto him, devote it thankfully unto his service. The Heathen were wont to make their Saviours their Gods. What said the people to David? *Thou hast saved us from the Philistines, reign thou over us.* Oh! for a people, rescued with such glorious salvations, for us to sit loose with God, grow strange to him, deal falsely in his Covenant, joyn other Gods with him; 'twill be odious ingratitude.

Vidimus autorem; Now follows,

Secondly, The Instrument of this deliverance, *Sent his Angel.* And this form of speech is observable for two reasons.

I. Why not *Angelus meus*; but *Deus meus*? He saith not, *God sent my Angel*, but *My God sent his Angel.* The assignment of particular Angels to particular men, that every one should have a Guardian Angel, may pass for a decent and probable opinion. Whether it be so, or no, we are sure they are his Angels, and employed by him for the Good of his Children. If our Faith can say, *Deus meus, My God*, 'twill be no Infidelity not to say, *Angelus meus, My Angel.* The Disciples indeed said, *'Tis Peter's Angel*; Act. xii. 15. But Peter himself, what saith he? *The Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me*, Verse 11. *Adstitit mihi Angelus Domini, cujus sum, & cui servo.* Act. xxvii. 23.

II. 'Tis not *Angelus venit*; but *Deus misit Angelum.* He saith not, *An Angel came*, but *God sent him.* That's another comfort. No doubt, those holy Angels and Spirits, are most forward, and ready to assist, and help us: But there is our comfort, that God sends them; that they help us not by their own motion, but by Gods mission, and commission. *Thou hast given commandment to save me*; Psal. lxxi. 3. 'Tis *misit*, *He gives his Angels charge*, Psal. xci. 'Tis Gods commandment and their employment to save us. The evil Angels cannot annoy us, but by Gods permission; and the good Angels they prove helpful to us by his command, and commission. *They are all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of Salvation*; Heb. i. 14. Had the Papists the setting out this Story, we should have had a long Legend penned by them, and the Name of the Angel should have been specified; and they would have told us, to which of the nine Orders of Angels he had belonged, and we should have had an Office published, and

Serm. I. and a set and solemn Form of Worship to this Angel enjoined. But *Daniel*, that was much acquainted, and conversant with Angels, over-looks all these, fixes his eye of Devotion, and thankfulness upon the God that sent, and employed this Angel. Angels abhor, that God should be wronged in ascribing to them the glory of our Deliverance. *If thou wilt offer a Sacrifice*, saith the Angel to *Manoah*, that would fain have done him honour, *Offer it to the Lord*. They desire not to receive worship from us; but delight in worshiping of God, to join together with us. 'Tis the definition, that *Athanasius* gives of an Angel; he is ζῶον λογικόν, ἀθάνατον, ὑμολογικόν. A rational, immortal creature, continually singing praises to God.

Now this Ministry of an Angel, in the delivering of *Daniel*, adds unto this deliverance three Excellencies.

I. It makes it a comfortable Deliverance. *Daniel* is here a forlorn, forsaken man, cast out of the Society of men into the Company of Beasts, compassed with horror, excluded from humane Succour: Well; but here is his comfort, he is visited by an Angel. Thus it befel Christ in his Temptations. *Mark. i. 13.* He was with the Wild Beasts in the Wilderness; and the Angels ministred unto him. The World may deprive us of its own comforts such as they are; but they cannot exclude us from the comforts of Angels. Here is the sweet supply of God's persecuted Servants, they are forsaken of men; but visited by Angels.

II. It makes it a glorious Deliverance. God had infinite ways to rescue him; but such a Saint shall not only have safety, but honour. Such glorious salvations he vouchsafes to his choice, and eminent Saints, and Servants. *Elias* shall be fed, not only by a Raven, but by an Angel too. He hath *Angelum pocillatorem*; an Angel is his Sewer and Cupbearer; as when *Abasuerus* would dignifie *Mordecai*, the most honourable of all his Nobles, and Princes, must be his Query, and attendant, and proclaim before him, *Thus it shall be done to the man, whom the King will honour*. King *Ahab's* Children were placed with the great men of the City to attend them. God's Children, and Servants are Guarded and compassed about with Legions of Angels.

III. An Angel is sent for his rescue, it makes an irresistible Deliverance; there is no disappointing of this Salvation. See how *Daniel's* Enemies make all sure; the den of Lions is closed, and sealed up: as *Pilate* sealed Christ's Sepulchre, set a watch of Souldiers that no man should open it. Alas! Can these exclude Angels, forbid their approach, or hinder it? Thus *Elisha* was begirt with an host of Enemies; but the Mountains were full of Horses, and Chariots of fire to protect, and safe-guard him. *Peter* is by *Herod* shut up in Prison bound in Chains, a watch of many Souldiers placed before the Prison, an Iron Gate made fast upon him: What then, One Angel of God breaks through all resistances, rescues him gloriously. If men can clip Angels wings, pinion those heavenly Souldiers, hinder or resist their forceable entrance, then, and not till then, they may have their will upon the Church of God. The Apostles were put into the common Prison by the High Priest, and those, that were with them, which was the Sect of the Sadduces. Well, these Sadduces shall know there are Angels; *The Angel of the Lord by night opened the Prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go stand, and speak to the People the words of this Life*, *Act. v. 18.* Even in this sense that Speech of *Paul* in the Temple is true; *I am a Prisoner in Bonds; but the word of the Lord is not bound*. There is no hindering of his Command by the Ministry of an Angel.

Now follows,

Thirdly, The manner of this Deliverance, how it was wrought; *He shut the mouths of the Lions*. God, no doubt, had many other ways to prevent, and disappoint this mischief. He might have altered the King's, and the Princes hearts, as he did the heart of *Abasuerus*. He made him give over his purpose of destroying, made him study the preservation of the Jews. So he changed *Esau's* bloody purpose against *Jacob*: he came marching in fury against him; but God allay'd his rage, made him kind, and loving to him. He spake by night to *Laban*, charged him not to wrong his servant *Jacob*. He could have sent a message, as he did

to Pilate, *Have nothing to do with this just man*; but see here, he suffers the malice of these wicked blood-thrifty men to come to the utmost, they ensnare him, surprize him, accuse him, condemn him, enclose him, seal him up, and then God dashes all. 'Tis a more glorious victory over the malice of men, give them rope, and scope enough, let them do their utmost; when all is set, even *in articulo mortis, in faucibus perditionis*, when these children, these brats of Satan, are come to the birth, there shall be no strength to bring forth.

So then, this Deliverance was wrought by shutting the mouths of the Lions. He delivers him not, by bringing him out of the den of Lions; but by preserving him in it. 'Tis more glorious, and wonderful, to preserve us in the midst of danger, than to snatch us out of it; as he did the three Worthies, *Chap. 3. in the Furnace*: the fire was about them flaming: He quenched not the fire, or suddenly caught them out of it; but preserved them in it, so that they walked, and talked, and sung in the midst of the Flames, and were not hurt by it. God sometimes saves us by prevention, keeps us from falling into danger; sometimes by subvention, by making us escape out of danger; but here by conservation, in the midst of danger. *Daniel* is among the Lions, and yet not devoured; to teach us, not to despair of help, though the snares of death be about us. He can make the Lions *prædæ suæ custodes*, become Guardians of *Daniel*. He can make poverty, imprisonment, all persecutions tollerable, and comfortable. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil*, saith *David*. As God did with these Lions, so God can deal with men that are as Lions, cruel, and merciless; He can restrain them; so he can deal with that *Leo rugiens*, the Divil that roaring Lion. God can stop their mouths: they may shew their teeth: but they shall not devour us. The Bush burnt with Fire; but it was not consumed: the Church may be on fire by persecutions, but shall not be destroyed.

But how did he shut the mouths of these Lions?

I. Either *Vt comprimendo*; by a secret power, weakning, or restraining them, taking off their force, and power of hurting him. Thus the Viper could not hurt *Paul*; the Fire could not have power over the Bodies of the Three Worthies. The Apostle joyns them both together, *Heb. xi. 33. They stoppt the mouths of Lions, quenched (not the fire, but) the violence of fire. At thy rebuke, O God, the Chariots, and Horsemen are fallen asleep.* No strength of any creature can avail, when God abates the force of it. *Esai. liv. 16. I have created the Smith, that blows the coals, — and the waster to destroy; but no weapon, that is formed against thee, shall prosper.* The smallest creatures, Flies, Lice, Locusts, if he commands them, can quickly destroy a whole Kingdom: Lions, if he rebuke them, are not able to annoy us.

II. Or *Ferociam mitigando*; by taming, and allaying their fierceness, and cruelty, and in changing their phantasie into a more milde apprehension. This is the security of Gods Saints: they have a Covenant with the Beasts of the Field, and the Stones in the streets are at peace with them. Thus *Isaiah* promises, *That the Lion shall lie down with the Lamb, and a young Child shall lead them; no noysom beast shall destroy in all my holy Mountains.* They that are in peace with God, all the Creatures shall be at peace with them. The fire shall not kindle upon thee; the Water shall not over-whelm thee.

III. Or *Saturitatem indendo*: repressing and slackning their hunger, dulling their appetite. God can rebate the edge of all hurtful things. Thus the Lord promised, that, at their resort to worship at *Hierusalem*, when they should leave their Frontier-Towns unmanned, *I will make, that none of the People about thee shall desire thy Land all that time, nor make any inrode, or invasion upon them.*

IV. Or *Danielem formidabilem iis reddendo*; by making the Prophet appear awful, and dreadful unto them. *Adam* in innocency had a Sovereignty over all the Beasts; the dread of him was upon all Creatures. This Image of God, now shining in *Daniel*, awes these Lions, that they dare not hurt him. *Thou shalt tread upon the Lion, and the Adder*, *Psal. xci. 13.* This is God's promise in *Ezek. xiv. When I send noysom beasts into the Land, Noah, Daniel, and Job, shall not be hurt by them.*

Our

Serm. I. Our rebellion against God, makes the Creatures rebel against us: our peace with him, our subjection to him, subdues them to us.

The next thing observable is,

Fourthly, Gradus liberationis, That they have not hurt me: not only, not devoured me; but not done the least harm to me: this makes it a compleat deliverance. The Lion slew the Prophet that went to *Bethel*; but did not devour him: here neither jaw, nor paw, neither tooth, nor talion, hath laid hold upon *Daniel*. Otherwise God delivers his Children, but not without some marks, and skars of damage upon them; such was their deliverance out of Captivity. He compares his people to a *Brand caught out of the fire*, Amos iv. 11. They were not *perusti*; but yet they were *ambusti*: not consumed, but yet scorched with that Fire. So Amos vii. 4. The LORD contendeth by fire, and it consumed a part. As the Shepherd takes out of the mouth of the Lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, Amos iii. 12. So sometimes but a remnant shall escape, So 2 Chron. xii. 8. God would not give over his People to be destroyed by *Shishak King of Egypt*: *Nevertheless they shall be his Servants* (they shall not wholly escape) *that they may know my service, and the service of other Kingdoms.* These were to correct his servants, and to punish sin in them. But here, and oft-times else, he vouchsafes them intire, compleat deliverances, without the least hurt; like the three Children, they were not consumed, nor scorched, not so much as the smell of Fire upon them. Thus he saved them at the Red-Sea, not one *Israelite* drowned, not one *Egyptian* saved: these were to justifie his children, and their Religion against their Persecutors.

Fifthly, The Motive, which God graciously respected, when he delivered his servant. And it is a double Innocency.

I. *Innocentia personæ.* He was an holy, and innocent Man: that's a prevailing motive with God. *He favours the integrity of his servants.* It makes him delight in their prosperity. But was not *Daniel* a sinner? Yes, verily, Chap. ix. 20. he confesseth his own sins. What saith St. John? *If we say, we have no sin, there is no truth in us.* John the *Daniel* of the New-Testament, and *Daniel* the John of the Old-Testament, both greatly beloved, they both confess themselves sinners. So then, there is a double innocency.

1. Legal and absolute. Put them to that tryal, they will fall short of innocency.

2. Evangelical. The innocency that Christ will accept, the innocency of a good Conscience, a freedom, not from infirmities, but from presumptuous sins. *David* avows such an innocency in himself, *Psal. xviii.*

(1.) Comparatively, Verse 21. *I have not departed from my God, as the wicked do.*

(2.) In aim, and intention, Verse 22. *I had an eye unto all his Laws.*

(3.) In all possible endeavour, Verse 23. *I eschewed mine own wickedness.*

Here is,

II. *Innocentia causæ.* He pleads the innocency of his cause. He had done no hurt to deserve this punishment at the King's hands; but he had disobeyed the King's Commandment, and yet he was innocent. He is an offender, that obeys not lawful Commands; otherwise obedience to God absolves us from obedience to unlawful Commands. But then with three Cautions.

1. It must be *in manifestè impiis*. Such was theirs; such was *Saul's* command to kill the Priests: but *in dubiis*, *Joab* dissuades à *numerando populo*; but yet obeys.

2. This refusal must be *absque contemptu*; still reserving our loyalty, and subjection.

3. It must be *cum passiva obedientia*: not resisting; but submitting to the penalties of Law.

So then, we may observe in this Motive four Combinations.

First, Duplex innocentia, coram Deo, coram Rege. Piety towards God, Loyalty to his King. They may, nay, they must be joined together: *Fear God, Honour the King*; so St. Peter joins them. We must neither be *Herodians*; so we hold with the King, and be true to him, 'tis no matter for God; nor yet *Pharisees*, pretend much piety to God, and be false-hearted to our King. We must be both good Subjects, and good Christians.

Second

Second Combination. Duplex Tribunal: Coram Deo; there he is found innocent; *Serm. I.*
coram Rege, there he is cast, and condemned, as nocent. Man's Tribunal may condemn us for transgressours, and delinquents; well, there is an higher Tribunal; *There are higher than they,* saith Solomon. God's Tribunal will acquit, and absolve us.

Third Combination. Duplex sollicitudo, he is careful to clear himself both to God, and to man also: But first, and chiefly to God, after that to man. That was the sum of Saint Paul's Apology, Acts. xxiii. 1. *I have lived in good conscience before God until this day;* but yet he neglects not the opinion of men. Indeed he less regards it. *'Tis but a small thing, that I should be judged of you,* 1 Cor. iv. 3. *'Tis pro Minimo,* but not *pro nullo;* he would not be accounted offensive, or scandalous before men.

Fourth Combination. Duplex purgatio, before God, that's a Purgation of evidence; *Found innocent before God:* Here is too *Purgatio Protestationis coram homine;* he could not evict it, but yet he professes it before men. *My record is in heaven,* there my innocency is apparent; my protestations are before men, to them I avow mine integrity, as St. Paul speaks, *Hominibus persuademus, Deo autem manifesti sumus;* 2 Cor. v. 11. *We persuade men, but we are made manifest to God.*

We have done with the Text.

It remains now we apply it to the Time; and see how this Story of Daniel, both for the Conspiracy, and for the Deliverance, will sort with the Story of this day, which we now commemorate; and which deserves to be transmitted to all Posterity. And we will make a double comparison of them;

First, in their Similitude, wherein they agree.

Secondly, in their Dissimilitude, wherein this of ours exceeds, and goes beyond this of Daniel's.

First, See their Similitude;

First, They are alike in the Authors of the Mischief. The Plotters of this Conspiracy, they were the Princes of Babylon: And was not this of ours hatch'd in the same Nest, framed in the same Forge? Their Babylonish Monarch, and Princes; the Pope, and his Complices contrived this Conspiracy. We may truly take up that Speech in Ezek. xxiv. 2. *Son of man, write the name of the day, even of this same day, The King of Babylon set himself against Hierusalem this same day.*

Secondly, As alike Authors, so alike Cause, and Motives; That was Envy (as that's the usual plotter of Treason.) They envied Daniel's Honour, and Prosperity, that he should be the chief Governour, and carry it from them. And that stirred up our Traitors, and Conspiratours. Oh! that the King should be peaceably possessed of the Crown, succeed in this Kingdom, not one of their Party; that galled, and vexed them. They laboured to put him down, whom God would advance.

Thirdly, *Similis prætextus.* They pretend the same Exception: That's matter of Religion. That's a fair Vizzard for foul Treason. Daniel must worship as they worship; Darius must be their God. And that was the pretence of our Traitors: The Romish Religion, the Catholick Cause, that must be advanced; nay indeed, the worshipping of their Darius, the Pope's Supremacy; no Religion, but by his allowance, 'tis that they stand for.

Fourthly, They have the like Plea, a Decree sealed, that cannot be altered. Daniel must die, the laws of the Medes and Persians were not to be changed. So our Traytors, they must put in execution Pope Clement's Brief, to exclude a Protestant from being King. That's an Oracle, the Pope is Infallible: Just as their Fore-fathers, the High Priests, and Pharisees, *We have a law, and by our law he ought to die,* Joh. xix. 7.

Fifthly, They had *Speluncam Leonum*, a dungeon of perdition, a swift, total, remediless perdition for Daniel. And our Traytors had their *Speluncam*, a Mine, a Vault, a Cellar, full fraught with Instruments of sudden unavoidable destruction.

Sixthly, *Similis liberatio;* Our Deliverance was alike;

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I. From God, no wisdom of man foreseeing it. *O res gestas in terra, sed caligatus, per homines, sed divinitus!* Aug.

II. By an Angel. An extraordinary discovery, by an over-ruling Providence. That Pen, by which that Letter was written, which first gave notice of this horrid Treason, being thereto over-ruled by God's great Providence, was made of a Quill of an Angel's Wing, as *Luther* saith of the writing of the Scripture, *The Devil hates that Fowl, from which that Quill was taken, which made that Pen, by which the Scripture was written.*

III. It was *ab Ore*: We were in the very Jaws of death, the Pit digged, the Train of Powder laid, the Match lighted.

IV. *Claust Ora*. No hurt was done, all crossed, and disappointed: The snare was broken, and we were delivered.

Seventhly, Innocentia comperta coram Deo. Our Religion by God justified, and miraculously honoured: The Seal of this glorious deliverance was set unto it.

Hitherto they agree; But now you shall see,

Secondly; The Treason of this day far exceeds that of the *Babylonish* Conspiracy.

First, That Plot was *contra unum*, against one man. Were *Daniel* removed, and destroyed, they would be satisfied: Here a whole Church, and Nation, the King, the Seed-Royal, the Nobles, Senatours, the whole Kingdom, should have been destroyed. *Haman's* Conspiracy; All the Jews.

Secondly, Their Plot was *contra alienigenam*; against *Daniel*, one of the *Jewish* Captivity: Our Traitors Plot against their own Brethren, and Country; they were all *English*-men. (I shame our Nation, in saying so; but so they were.) *Fight not against your Brethren, the Children of Israel. Moses* had rather kill an *Egyptian*, than strive with an *Hebrew*. *Ye are Brethren, why wrong you one another?* If *Jacob* cursed *Simeon* and *Levi's* cruelty against the *Sichemites*, how odious is their cruelty against their Brother *Joseph*?

Thirdly, Theirs was an attempt of King, and Princes, against a Subject; this of ours was of Subjects against King, and State. For Princes to havock their Subjects lives, 'tis cruel; *Summa parsimonia vilissimi sanguinis*: But for Subjects to murder Kings, and Princes, 'tis abominable. *Locustæ sunt, & non habent Regem*; these Locusts they have no King, saith *Solomon*.

Fourthly, *Daniel's* Conspiratours were Nobles, Captains, Souldiers, Secular men; the sufferer, a Prophet, of a religious Profession: Here our Traitors, and Plotters, the chief of them, Priests, Jesuits, Holy Fathers, men of the Church. 'Tis cruel for Secular men to murder the Priests of God: But for Priests to be Incendiaries, stirrers of sedition, to imbrue their hands in blood, 'tis horrid iniquity.

Fifthly, The proceeding of these men against *Daniel* was much more merciful.

I. He had warning given him by a publick Law.

II. They used a legal Trial, by conviction and condemnation. *Daniel* had time to address himself to God, to fit himself for death. This Treason of ours was secret, unknown, sudden: no time, or thought of death afforded, but, in a moment, all blown up, and destroyed.

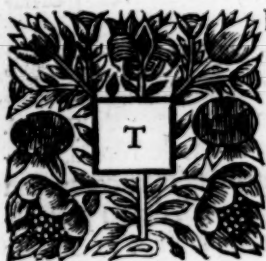
Sixthly, After the deliverance of *Daniel*, *Darius* repents of what he had done, condemns the Conspiratours, and punishes them, glorifies God, and that Religion, which was thus by God approved, advances *Daniel*: But for our Traytours, the Pope doth not so much as check them, as dislike them. So far he was from *Jacob's* bitter detestation of *Simeon* and *Levi's* cruelties, as that he did not, with old *Eli*, blame, and reprove them: Nay, he Canonizes them for Martyrs, that suffered for this Treason; Books must be written to defend, and justify them. The *Israelites*, when God answered by Fire from Heaven, forsook *Baal*, cried, *The LORD is God*. Our God hath answered us not by kindling, but by quenching of Fire: Yet there is no relenting, or the least repenting. Well, let us thankfully acknowledge this Mercy, lest this Judgment of War finish that Work, which those Traytours intended, and so *Æshines* his Speech prove true of us: *Newer Nation was more Miraculously preserved by God, never any more monstrously destroyed by themselves.*

ON THE
GUNPOWDER-TREASON.

The Second Sermon.

Daniel III. 28.

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his Angel, and delivered his servants, that trusted in him, and have changed the King's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve, nor worship any God, except their own God.



THE Chapter is a Relation of a sharp and bloody Persecution upon the Church of God, for their refusal of Idolatry. It is an Instance of that, which St. *Peter* calls the *Fiery Trial*. *Babylon*, the Chief Seat of Heathenish Superstition, singled out by the Spirit of God, for the Type, and representation, both of the Idolatry, and Cruelty, that shall afflict the Church in these last days, is here the Stage, on which a bloody Tragedy was acted. And as St. *Augustine* saith of *Doeg*, that slew the Prophets of God; *Unus homo est Doeg, sed genus hominum est Doeg*; *Doeg* is not one man only; but the Type, and Figure of many: (Many *Doegs* have been, and many will ever be, that carry bloody minds against the Priesthood); so *Babylon* is not that one City only, that, in *Daniel's* Time, persecuted the Church of God. There is literal *Babylon*, and mystical *Babylon*. *Augustine* notes it upon those words of *David*, O daughter of *Babylon*; *Babylon*, saith he, is both a Mother, and a Daughter: *Mater propter prolatum, Filia propter successionem*. A primitive *Babylon*; and a successive *Babylon*; the Eastern *Babylon*, and the Western *Babylon*. This latter the Daughter of the former, in a full likeness and imitation;

First, In Power, and Supremacy.

Secondly, In Superstition, and Idolatry.

Thirdly, In Persecution, and Cruelty. This Chapter testifies for the one, this day is a great evidence, and conviction for the other: Both thirsting after the blood of the Saints, and of the Servants of God.

Let us reflect a little upon the present Story of this Chapter, and we shall observe a full agreement, and a similitude, in the Idolatries, and Cruelties of that Primitive *Romish Babylon*, and this present *Babylonish Rome*, that now Usurps and Tyrannizes over the Church of God.

First, The Idolatry of both of them, 'tis sumptuous, and costly. The Chapter tells us of an high Statue, and Idol of Gold, erected by the King of *Babylon*, *Verf. 1*. Superstition, and Idolatry will be no Niggard, it will spare no cost; but be expenceful, and sumptuous, to maintain an invented and Superstitious Worship.

I. *Nebuchadnezzar* must have no petty diminutive God: *six cubits in breadth, sixty cubits in height*. Goodly, goodly! What's this to the infinite immensity of our God, that fills Heaven, and Earth!

II. It must be of Metal too, lasting, and durable. A mock-imitation of the true God's Eternity. *Isaiah* tells us, that the poorest Idolater, that must be content with a wooden God, yet chooses a Tree that will not rot, *Isa. xl. 20*.

Serm. II. III. It must be rich, and costly, all of beaten Gold. *Their Idols, saith David, are Silver, and Gold.* How readily did the *Israelites* break off their Ear-rings of gold, to make their Golden Calf? It may shame us Christians, that are so basely penurious in maintaining, and beautifying the worship of our God, nay, worse than so, sacrilegiously robbing, and spoiling our God, and his Church: imitating *Verres*, his Reformation of *Sicily*; he took away all the rich Images of their Gods, only he left them *ligneam Fortunæ statuam*, a wooden Image, of which he could make no money.

Secondly, The erecting of this Idol is done with the greatest authority. *Nebuchadnezzar*, the great Monarch of the World, is chiefest in the work, and engaged in it: These have been made the maintainers, and supporters of *Romish* superstition. The Kings of the Earth have been made to drink of the Cup of *Rome's* abominations. The great Ones of the World have committed this *spiritual Fornication with that Whore of Babylon*.

Thirdly, 'Tis done with great Pomp, and Solemnity. Here is a glorious Dedication of this new-upstart God, with all Splendour, and Magnificence. Outward Glisten and Pomp, is the Beauty of the Malignant Church. See how *St. John* describes her; *She is crowned with Gold, clothed with purple, adorned with precious Stones.* Whereas the Church of Christ, she is clothed with the Sun, supported by the Moon, crowned with Stars; all of them spiritual, and heavenly ornaments.

Fourthly, 'Tis done with great Content, and Universality. All the Governours, and Princes of the Provinces are gathered together; Verse 2. all engaged in this Idolatrous Worship. This sin of Idolatry, it hath been an over-spreading Evil. *Tertullian* calls it *seculi reatus*, the Great crime, and guilt of the whole World. Every man lifts up his voice, and cries *Great is Diana of the Ephesians!* This command of *Nebuchadnezzar* is yielded to by the multitude; all the people fall down presently, readily accept of the new-invented God. 'Tis Gods complaint, *The Statues of Omri are kept: All Israel worship the Golden Calf.* They willingly went after the commandments of King *Jeroboam*, as *Hosea* speaks.

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Sixthly, Notwithstanding all this violence in pressing, and this great generality of submitting to this Idolatrous Injunction, yet, here a few, a small number, an handful, three men, that deny their conformity, and refuse to engage themselves in this publick Impiety. In the greatest Universality, and prevailing of Impiety; yet God hath some, that withstand Superstition, and give Testimony to his Truth. *St. Paul* speaks it to another purpose, but 'tis true in this Case also, *God leaves not himself without witness.* He hath his *Noah*, a righteous man in the midst of an evil Generation; his *Lot* in *Sodom*; his *Elias* amongst *Baal's* Priests; a few names in *Sardis*; some, even where Satan's Throne is, that hold fast his Name, and not deny his Faith. Two witnesses against the whole world: a few captived *Jews*, that deny their worship to this new-erected Deity.

Seventhly, Upon these, the penalty of the Law is inflicted in all extremity.

I. Though but Three.

II. They, men of great place, and Employment, set by the King over the Affairs of the Province of *Babylon*, useful to the State.

III. Peaceable; no Raisers of Sedition, and Tumult.

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IV. No Blasphemers of this new-made God; but only bare refusers, and that for Conscience sake: they dare not do it, and yet condemned to a cruel tormenting death, and their punishment increased, the Furnace made seven times hotter. Here is the rage of Idolatry; here is the cruelty of King, or rather Pope, *Nebuchadnezzar*.

You have seen the practice, and proceedings of this bloody Religion. These refusers are seized upon, and cast into the Furnace: Well, what's the success? that's extraordinary, and miraculous. God gives way to these men of blood, lets them do their utmost; He saves not these three holy men by rescue, or prevention, he keeps them not from the Fire; but preserves them in it: They are, like *Moses* his Bush, burning, but not consumed: *The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire*. That is here performed, which *Isaiah* foretold, and promised, *Chap. xliii. 2. When thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee*. And this Deliverance, 'tis not secret, but conspicuous, in the eye, and observation of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who seeing, and wondering at this strange deliverance, gave this great acknowledgement of it, which the Text mentions.

So then, this passage of Scripture in this, and the two following Verses, reports to us a solemn Testimony given by *Nebuchadnezzar*, to this miraculous deliverance of these three holy men, from a cruel destruction. And this his Testimony will appear in three Evidences, and Manifestations of it.

First, It appears in a thankful Benediction of Almighty God for this gracious deliverance: that's set down *Verse 28*. which I have read unto you; *Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*.

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Serm. II. of the usage of the Christian Church by Kings, and Emperours. First, they are, like *Nebuchadnezzar*, erecting Idolatry, destroying Christianity; then, like *Nebuchadnezzar*, they acknowledged, and established that Faith, which formerly they destroyed, and made good Laws for it.

Well, this Blessing of *Nebuchadnezzar* hath *aliquid Humanum* in it, or some sparks of Humanity in it. To be glad, and well-pleased, for the saving of mens lives, for the sparing of blood-shed, such thanksgivings are comely. We may learn this from *David*, *Psal. cvii.* There he meditates on the miseries, and dangers that befall mankind, the dangers of Travellers, the miseries of Captives, the diseases of Sick men, the perils of Sea-men, and blesses God for all their deliverances: *Oh! that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the Children of men.*

Sure they were of another Spirit, that were the masters of the mischief that was intended this day. They hung down their Heads, as men disappointed of what they intended; the ruine of this Nation. These *Nebuchadnezzars* of *Rome* gave no thanks to God for this day's deliverance; but Books were set out to justify the Traytours; nay, Bulls were sent forth to Canonize them for Saints. If a King, or Kingdom be delivered from destruction; all is silent, and fullen at *Rome*. But, if a King be murdered, as *Henry the Third of France*, by an assassinating Monk, then 'tis Holy-Day at *Rome*. The Pope call's a Consistory, makes an Oration, admires God's Providence, that a poor Member should dispossess, and murder a mighty Prince. Even *Heathenish Babylon* exceeds in humanity the *Romish Babylon*. When King *Hezekiah* was recovered out of a great danger, the King of *Babylon* sent to congratulate his recovery, and to rejoyce with him. Indeed *Rome* is not only spiritual *Babylon*, but spiritual *Edom* too: imitating those wicked *Edomites*, in rejoycing at the ruins, and desolations of Kingdoms. The Prophet *Obadiah* lays it to the charge of *Edom*, *Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy Brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoyced over the Children of Judah, in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress,* Verse 12. Let such rejoycers consider what *Solomon* saith: *He that is glad of Calamities, shall not be unpunished,* *Prov. xvii. 5.*

To take a more particular notice of this benediction, and blessing of *Nebuchadnezzar's*, let us consider it in a double notion.

I. Let us see, *Quid laudabile*; what was good, and commendable in it.

II. *Quid defectivum & culpabile*; wherein it was faulty, and defective.

I. *Benedicit, non prosequitur*; that is one thing commendable. He goes not on obstinately, nor renews his persecution; a Miracle stops him, and forthwith he desisteth. He is not as some other persecuting Tyrants have been, the more enraged at this strange deliverance. That was *Pharaoh's* impiety; God's Miracles, and Wonders, did the more harden him, still he persisted in his oppressions. So *Ahab*, and *Jezabel*, though God by *Elias* wrought a strange miracle, sending fire from heaven, yet see how they are enraged; the very next day a message is dispatched to tell the Prophet, he must lose his head for it. So *Ahab's* son *Abaziah*, when fire from heaven had consumed his Captain, and his fifty, that came to apprehend *Elijah*, yet stubbornly he persists, dispatches a second, and yet a third Troop of Souldiers, to seize on the Prophet. We see that wicked spirit in the obstinate *Jews*; our Savior wrought a wonderful Miracle in raising *Lazarus* out of his Grave; why, this Miracle did more enrage them. First, they consult to put *Lazarus* to death, and then they resolve to destroy Christ himself. And this hath been the practice of our *Romish* Traytors. How many Treasons had they plotted; and yet how many marvelous defeats have they met with? Many a time have they conspired against our Church; yea, many a time have they sought our ruine, but they have not prevailed against us. And yet they could not see God's hand; but hatched this Treason, against King and Kingdom. St *Hierome* writes of an innocent woman, *Septies icta*; seven times struck at with a sword to be beheaded. Our Church hath had more Blows given it; and yet Malice, and Envy will not desist. That's the First, *Benedicit, non prosequitur*.

2. *Benedicit,*

2. *Benedicit, non calumniatur.* He blesses God for this deliverance, he quarrels not at the Miracle, as wrought by some false Deity, or by means of delusion. We know Pharaoh, and his servants, Jannes and Jambres, withstood the Miracles that Moses did work; they counted them but juggling Tricks, and Enchantments, and would not yield to them, as divine Operations. Thus did the Pharisees with our Saviour's Miracles; *He casts out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of Devils.* They said he did what he did by the Black Art. 'Tis the usual practice of Infidels, to question and vilifie the wonderful Works of God, as they did that great Miracle of leading the People through the Red-Sea. Oh! they said, *Moses took the advantage of a Low-tide, carried them over the Washes, when it was Low-water.* 'Tis Satan's practice to defame the works of God, and to make ill constructions of them. But this King here is more ingenuous; he speaks rightly, and reverently of them.

3. *Benedicit, non obvelat.* He takes notice of the Miracle, doth not labour to smother, and conceal it; gives no commandment, that no man should speak of it, but is forward to give an honourable Testimony of it. Malice loves and labours to darken, and obscure, such Evidences of God's power, when they make against them. Even this day's deliverance, though so gloriously evident; yet Books have been written by the Romish Faction, that report it a meer Fable, that there was no such thing as the Powder-Treason. Of such a spirit were the obstinate Jews. How did they set themselves to smother the Glory of Christ's Resurrection? Say, *He was stolen away while we slept, His Disciples removed his Body out of the Grave:* 'twas no such matter as a Resurrection. How did they bestir themselves to stifle this Miracle, even when it was confirmed by another Miracle! *Act. iv. 16. What shall we do to these men? (say they) for that indeed a notable Miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all, and we cannot deny it; but, that it spread no farther among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this Name.* But this Miracle here works more kindly upon Nebuchadnezzar, he owns and acknowledges it.

We have seen what is commendable in this Benediction: But yet it hath its defects; something is wanting here in Nebuchadnezzar, more would have been expected from him.

1. *Benedicit; sed non dolet.* He is well pleased with their deliverance; but yet here is no sign of sorrow, or remorse for his Cruelty towards them; no Confession of his fault, in so bloody a persecution. These, and such as these, Miraculous Evidences of Gods Power, should beget other effects in us, besides wonder, and admiration: They should make us reflect upon our selves, and our sins. As it was with St. Peter, when Christ wrought a Miracle in his Ship, at the great draught of Fishes, what said Peter? *Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man,* Luk. v. 8. 'Twas not so with the Malefactors of this day; no sense, or sign of sorrow for that bloody contrivance. The worst they said of it, was, *It was the act of some unfortunate Gentlemen.* But, had it taken effect, we should have had Paulus Quintus, like Sextus Quintus, call another Consistory, set up a Picture of it, as they did of the Massacre in France, in the Pope's Palace. That's one defect.

2. *Benedicit; sed non convertitur.* He blesses God, and applauds the Miracle; and there he stops: but is not drawn by it to a religious conversion, to believe in that God, which had wrought such great things for the deliverance of his Servants. A man may be much affected with the glory of God's Works, and praise, and magnifie them: But if it have no other work upon us, it is lost, and spilt. The High-Priests Officers, they wondered at Christ's Wisdom, the People were oft-times much taken with his Miracles; but yet fell short of true Conversion. Christ charges this defect upon the Jews. He upbraided the Cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not; They wrought admiration, but conversion. *Mat. xi.* The deliverance of the Jews from Haman's Conspiracy, it wrought better with the People, that saw, and observed it. 'Tis said, many of the People of the Land became Jews, *Est. viii.* embraced that Religion, which God so protected. Such a good effect had the Miracle upon the Jaylor, *Act. xvi.* When he found the Prison doors opened by an Earth-quake, and the Apostles

Serm. II. Apostles Chains fallen from them, presently he cries, *Sirs, What shall I do to be saved?* Teach me to be a Christian. The like operation a Miracle had upon *Naman the Syrian*, 2 *King. v.* Behold, saith he, *now I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; I will therefore neither offer Burnt-offerings, nor Sacrifices to any other Gods, but unto the Lord.* And the Deliverance of this day should have had the like effect in our bloody Traitors, but it had not; no renouncing of that bloody Faction, no embracing of that holy Religion, to which God gave Testimony by so wonderful a Preservation.

3. *Benedicit in causa aliorum, non in sua.* He blesses God in the behalf of these men, but not in his own behalf: He blesses not God, that had miraculously prevented his wicked Design in murdering, and destroying these holy men. 'Tis a great mercy of God to keep us from suffering evil, but it is a greater mercy of God, to keep us from doing evil, that our wicked intendments do not take place, but that God interposes and disappoints us. Saint Paul makes his acknowledgment of both these mercies; both in delivering him from suffering evil, and in preserving him from doing evil, 2 *Tim. iv. 17.* *The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, and I was delivered from the mouth of the Lion:* there he was rescued from suffering; but then he adds, *The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work; and preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom.* That's the great Mercy in preserving us from doing evil. See this pious practice in *David*, 1 *Sam. xxv. 32.* being reproached by *Nabal*, in a sudden Passion he marches furiously to destroy *Nabal*, and all that belonged to him; but, being prevented by *Abigail's* seasonable entreaty, what saith he? *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thine advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging my self with mine own hand.* 'Twill one day be a comfort, when thy Heart can say; *Lord, I have not wished for the evil day, I have not put mine hand to any violent action; God hath kept me from the ways of the destroyer.* We have done with the Benediction. Come we now,

Secondly, To the Person, to whom 'tis ascribed; The Author of this deliverance; that's *The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*

See here, he ascribes this great Work to the right Author, to the true God; doth not impute it to any false Deity. 'Tis He, that sends deliverance to his People. 'Tis He, that works salvation in the midst of the earth. *To him belong the issues from death,* *Psal. lxxviii. 20.*

But yet, why doth he make this acknowledgment of God under this Expression, *The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego;* This Speech of *Nebuchadnezzar's*,

I. Implies three errors in him.

II. Implies three Truths in it self.

1. Conceive it as the Speech of an Ignorant man, of one that had no knowledge of the true God; but upon this present evidence, and manifestation of him. God had other more antient Titles, by which he was known. He was the *God of Heaven*, the *Lord of the whole Earth*, the *God of Abraham*, and of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*; that was his name for ever, this is his memorial unto all generations; *Exod. iii. 15.* But this Pagan King knows him not by these glorious descriptions. Before he speaks in *Pharaoh's* Language, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I know not the Lord; who is that God, that shall deliver you out of my hands?* *Ver. 15.* Now a sudden flash of Lightning shines into him; but otherwise habitually ignorant. He knew him not by the work of Creation, by his daily Providence, by his sacred Scriptures, by his gracious Covenant; but only by this sudden miracle, owns him by this Title, *The God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.*

2. This Speech, proceeding from this King, 'tis the language of Idolatry. Paganism and Idolatry, uses to distinguish of Gods, to multiply them, and to make and imagine many differences of God-heads. Idolatry uses to divide that indivisible Unity of the One only God. *Nebuchadnezzar* hath his Gods, old and new; and he supposes these men have another God by themselves, and he likes well of it. 'Tis the Character of Paganism, they have *Deos Topicos*, & *Regionarios*, Provincial

al Gods, and National Gods, Gods of the Hills, and Gods of the Vallies, as the *Syrians* distinguish. Like the Mariners, and Passengers in the Ship with *Jonah*, *Every one called to his several God*; if one cannot help, the other may. This, *Saint Paul* tells us, is the Case of Idolaters. *There are Gods many, and Lords many; but to us there is but one God, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.* 'Tis that, which *Zechary* Prophecies of, *Chap. xiv. 9. There shall be but one Lord, and His name shall be One.*

3. This Speech, 'tis the Language of one persisting still in his Infidelity. He calls this great wonder-working God, *The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*: He doth not call him his God, for all this great Evidence of his divine Majesty. He doth not, with *Naaman*, abandon, and cast off his former false Gods; faith not, *There is no God in the Earth, but the God of Israel*; resolves not, *This God shall be my God*: But speaks of him at a distance, like his Successor *Darius*, *Cannot thy God whom thou serveest, deliver thee?* Then this Miracle had wrought kindly; had it not only caused him to wonder, and stand at a gaze; but had drawn him nearer to God, and to close with him. What King *Abaz* said wickedly of the *Assyrians* false Gods, *Nebuchadnezzar* should have said piously of the true God. What said *Abaz*? *2 Chron. xxviii. 23. Because the Gods of the Kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me.* Because the great God thus delivers his Servants, this God shall be my God, and I will serve him only. These are the Errours in this Speech of *Nebuchadnezzar's*.

But look upon this Speech in it self, and so it carries with it an intimation of three Truths.

1. 'Tis *Vinculum Religionis*. It shews us the near relation which Religion gives us to our God, it appropriates God unto his servants, makes him to be their God in a special manner. Piety, it doth *isomovir*, it makes God to be our God, and us to be His People. There passes a mutual Vouchee 'twixt God and us, by the tie of Religion; as *Moses* tells the *Israelites*, *Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Thou hast avouched the LORD to be thy God, and to walk in his ways; and the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar People, and to make thee high above all Nations.* This honour have all the Saints. *They are a People near unto him*, as *David* calls them, *Psal. cxlviii. 14. He is not ashamed to be called their God*, *Heb. xi. 16.* There is an interchangeable assuming of each others Name: His Name is called upon them, they are called His People; they are called *The People of the God of Abraham*, *Psal. xlvii. 9.* And their Name is attributed to him; he is called their God. As *Augustine* often speaks, *Caput & corpus unus est Christus*; alluding to that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. xii. 12. As the body is many Members, so also is Christ.* There the Church is called by Christ's Name. Elsewhere he assumes the Name of his People: *Psal. xxiv. 6. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O Jacob*; that is *O God of Jacob*. A great honour, for the King to suffer a Subject to quarter any part of the King's Arms, or to call himself by the Name of his Subject. *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Cujus omnes gentes sunt, quasi trium hominum Deus esset*, faith *Augustine*; He calls himself by the Name of these three men, though all men living are under his Dominion.

2. 'Tis *honor confessionis*. This Name, and appellation, that he is called the God of these three men, 'tis the honour, and dignity of this their noble confession, in sticking to his service, though they die for it. They had honoured his name, and now God honours their names, puts them amongst his Titles of Honour. They that honour him, shall be honoured by him. Whereas flinchers, and Renegadoes shall be forgotten, their name cast out as vile: Such Worthies as these, their Names shall not be blotted out of the *Book of life*. He will confess their names before his Father, and his holy Angels, *Rev. iii. 5.* And again, *He that overcomes, upon him will I write the name of my God, I will write upon him my new Name*, *Verse 12.* These are the Stars of the first Magnitude in the Firmament of his Church; like *David's* Worthies, that stuck to him in all his troubles, and maintained his cause with the hazard of their lives; their Names are upon record, transmitted to posterity.

3. 'Tis *jus liberationis*. This Title, *the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*,

Serm. II. implies a new claim, that God lays to these three men, for working their deliverance, they are become *his servants*, he is become their God, by right of rescue, and deliverance. *Servi, à servando*; they are called servants, for being saved, and preserved by him. New deliverances multiply, and strengthen God's Title to us; as *David* confesses, *Psal. cxvi. 16. LORD, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine hand-maid, thou hast loosed my bonds.* He acknowledges himself both a born servant, and a servant by purchase, and rescue, and enlargement. *Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, We are thy servants, thou hast redeemed us from the hand of the enemy.* God purposely inserts these deliverances into his Royal Title, *Jer. xxiii. 7, 8. They shall say, The LORD lives, who led the house of Israel out of the North Country, and brought them out of Captivity.* And so again, promising his People rest from their enemies, He adds, *This shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be forgot, Isa. lv. 14.*

Come we,

Thirdly, To the next particular, the working of this deliverance by sending of an Angel.

I. What is the Mercy? that's deliverance.

II. What is the Minister, and Instrument? how is it wrought? by the dispatch of an Angel.

I. The great work here is deliverance, and riddance of these men from a mischief, and destruction. Indeed deliverance is the work that God delights in, by which he will make himself known to be the true God. *Samuel* makes it the proof of a false God, *That they cannot profit, or deliver,* 1 Sam. xii. 21. And the Prophet upbraids *Amaziah* for chusing those Gods that could not deliver *their own people out of his hands,* 2 Chron. xxv. 15. If he be a God, let him shew himself, by saving of *his servants.* But our God is known by this gracious work, by sending, by commanding, by working deliverances for them that wait on him.

And this deliverance, 'tis the more admirable;

1. Because from a present destruction. 'Tis not by way of prevention: He keeps them not from the danger, but rescues them out of it. He suffers this bloody Tyrant to seize upon them, condemn them, cast them into the Fiery Furnace, and then miraculously he saves them. That's here performed, which *Isaiah* foretold and promised, *Chap. xliii. 2. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.* Such was *St. Peter's* deliverance, *Act. xii. Herod* had resolved his destruction, he was cast into prison, the Iron Gate lock'd upon him, the next morning appointed for his Execution: and then God disappoints all; dispatches deliverance upon the wings of an Angel, and forthwith delivers him. And such was our deliverance. Powder provided, the Match kindled, but a step betwixt us and death.

2. Because it was a deliverance from a dreadful destruction, from a most cruel tormenting death, from the burning Furnace. As is the danger, such is the deliverance. A deliverance from any mishap, is a blessing. To deliver our feet from falling, to keep us from the daily mischief that might befall us, 'tis a fair favour; but deliverance from death, from a cruel tormenting death, (such was this in the Text, such was this of this day), it makes up a wonderful, and glorious deliverance. We may take up *David's* acknowledgement, *Psal. xxxv. 20. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him: that sendest such deliverances as these, from such extremities.*

3. Because it was a total deliverance: Not the least hurt done, not an hair of their heads perished. Not like the deliverance *Zechary* speaks of, *a brand snatch'd out of the fire, scorcht,* though not consumed; not like the deliverance *Amos* speaks of, *Chap. iii. the rescue of a worried sheep out of the mouth of a Lion, two legs, or a piece of an ear, half saved, half destroyed:* no, this was a compleat intire deliverance. *The fire had no power over their bodies, nor was an hair of their heads singed, neither were their coats changed, not the smell of the fire had passed on them,* Verse 7. Such was this day's deliverance; all devoted, but yet none given over to destruction. The Stone out of the Wall, still standing, can testify; and the beam out of the
Timber,

Timber, still remaining, shall answer, and witness for this day's deliverance.

II. For the Instrument, it was by the sending, and dispatch of an Angel. I will not insist upon it. You heard of this deliverance by an Angel, in this place, and on this occasion, out of *Daniel's* confession, *My God hath sent his Angel*: which makes, as that then, so this now, to be a comfortable, an honourable, an irresistible deliverance. Only in this present deliverance by an Angel, take notice,

1. Of God's Majesty.

2. Of the Churches Security.

3. Of their Enemy's Madnes, and Folly; to assault, and persecute them.

I. Admire, and glorifie our God's great Majesty; who hath his glorious Angels always attending, speedily dispatching his will, and commands. *Nebuchadnezzar* hath his Princes, and Governours, and Captains, and Counsellors, all in attendance on him, *with great Pomp, and Magnificence*. Alas! what is this to the God of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*? He hath his Legions of Angels, *Thousand thousands ministring unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand always standing before him*. If the Queen of *Sheba* wondred at the attendance of *Solomon's* servants, how should we adore that God, that hath his innumerable Angels that excel in strength, to do his commandments!

2. See here the Churches security. The Holy Angels are ready to rescue, and deliver them. 'Tis not with the Church of God, as 'tis with other men. The greatest Princes may come to that exigent, as to say with the King of *Israel*, when he was called upon for help, *If the Lord do not help thee, how can I help thee?* No, the chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of Angels. 'Tis not for want of help, that his people are not delivered from the power of their enemies; but for other expediences. As *Austin* asks the question, comparing these mens deliverances with the death of the seven Saints in the *Macchabees*; *Nonne est ipse Deus Macchabeorum, qui trium Puerorum?* Was he not the God of the *Macchabees*, as well as of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*? *Illi aperte liberati sunt; hi occulte coronati*: he would save these from fire, but crown the *Macchabees* for their Martyrdom in fire. He was magnified in these men, by their life, and in the others he was magnified by death, by which they glorified God.

3. Let the Churches Persecutors see against whom they fight, against a People, that can be rescued by force of Angels. It should strike terror into the most potent Persecutors. They fight not against flesh and blood only, but against spiritual rulers, and dominions, and thrones, and principalities, and powers in heavenly places. *Nebuchadnezzar* hath his burning furnace, God hath his flames of fire to oppose them, *Psal. x. 44. He makes his Angels Spirits, his Ministers a flaming fire*. He that will make War with God, and his Church, let him sit down, and consider, whether he can meet him with ten thousand weak men, that comes against him with twenty thousand mighty Angels? Alas! what were the most mighty men of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that cast these men bound into the fiery Furnace, if compared to the Angel of God? How soon were they consumed? *Ver. 22. As Chrysostome* speaks sweetly, Those three Worthies were, like Gold in the Furnace, not consumed, but more resplendent: the men that cast them in, like Straw at the mouth of the Furnace, soon burnt, and destroyed. *Palea uritur, Aurum purgatur*; August.

Fourthly, The fourth thing remarkable, in this Acknowledgment of *Nebuchadnezzar's*, is the Motives, which he alledges, why God wrought this deliverance for these three men; they are four.

I. *Quia servi. He hath delivered his servants*. See now he speaks honourably of these men, accounts them the servants of the most high God: Before, he esteemed them factious, refractory, turbulent men, such, as will be wiser, forsooth! then all the World, go against the publick proceedings; but now he is compelled to testify for them, that they are holy, and religious men, and what they have done, was in the service of their God. Those, whom the great Ones of the World malign, and persecute, these they shall one day acknowledge them the blessed servants of God. The Wise man speaks to this purpose; *This is he whom we sometimes had in derision, and a Proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his*

Serm. II. *end to be without honour; how is he numbred among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints! Wisd. v. 3.*

And this Consideration, That they are his servants, 'tis a well alledged Motive, why they are delivered. His faithful Service, 'tis a safe Protection.

1. To his Servants God promises Protection.

2. His Servants upon this Title they plead for Protection.

1. To such he promises Protection. Indeed sometimes he saves, and delivers others; but he covenants with his Servants to secure, and protect them. A Master owes protection to his servants. It concerns God, in point of honour, to rescue such from wrong. Did David revenge the Villany done to his servants by the King of Ammon? and shall not God stand by his servants, that stand close to him? See the Charter of our Protection, *Isaiah liv. 17. No Weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; 'tis their heritage, and portion: as we say, Protection by the Laws is the Subjects Birth-right.*

2. This their Interest God's servants plead, when they pray for Protection. Thus David prays for himself, pleads his Priviledge, that he is God's servant, *Psal. lxxxvi. 2. O save thy servant.* So again, *Psal. cxix. 17. Deal bountifully with thy servant: and yet again, Be surety for thy servant; undertake for him.* And thus David pleads for the People of God, *Psal. xlv. 17. We have not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy Covenant.* And see this plea urged by the Servants of God against the Apostate Israelites, that made war against them, *2 Chron. xiii. 9, 12. Have ye not cast out the Priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron? but as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him, and the Priests, that minister unto the LORD, are the sons of Aaron — We keep the charge of the LORD our God, but ye have forsaken him; God himself is with us, fight not against the LORD, for you shall not prosper.* The poor Gibeonites, when they were in distress, plead thus with Joshua, *Slack not thine hand from thy servants: come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us.*

And as God promises, and his People plead for it, so he will surely perform a gracious Deliverance unto his Servants. It should teach us to get under this Protection; strive to do him the most service. Men set by good servants, are forward to speak for them, ready to defend them. What faith David? *O ye seed of Abraham his servant. He suffered no man to do them wrong. He rebuked Kings for their sakes, Psal. cv. 14. How durst you speak against my servant Moses? Numb. xii. 8.* That's *Primum motivum, quia servi.* The second Motive, which Nebuchadnezzar takes notice of, is,

II. *Quia confidentes*; Because they trusted in him, therefore he delivered them. As Saint Ambrose speaks of St. Peter's walking upon the Water, *Super aquas ambulabat non Petri corpus, sed fides*; 'Twas his Faith that enabled him: So we may say of these men walking in the Fire; 'Twas their Faith that enabled them, *quia confidentes.* This Motive exceedingly inclines God to deliver us. Faith in him, 'tis our chief security. The shield of Faith, 'tis our *Palladium*, our main fence and Protection. *He is a Buckler to all them that trust in him, Psal. xviii. 30.* He hath delivered his servants from dangers, even when they were fearful, and doubting; as he did his Disciples: *O ye of little Faith, wherefore did you doubt? How much more safe shall they be, that fully rely on him? They that trust in the Lord, they are as impregnable as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, Psal. cxxv. 1.* The Apostle ascribes this and such like deliverances to Faith, *Heb. xi. 33. Through Faith they stopt the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the Sword.* Glorious salvations have been wrought by Faith. Hence it is, that an Omnipotency is given to Faith. *All things are possible to him that believes.* And Faith hath this prevailing power with God;

1. Because it ascribes to him the glory of his notice, and special care over us. Our Faith faith, He knows our Souls in adversity. His Providence is over all; *Sed curam sibi Ecclesia vindicat. He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10.* A weak Faith faith, *Lord, carest thou not that we perish? But a confident Faith faith, Lord, thou dost care for us, that we perish not.* And then our Faith prevails thus with him,

2. Because

2. Because it ascribes the glory of his power to him, that he is abundantly able to save us. These three men said confidently, *Our God is able to deliver us*, Verse 17. Faith lays hold on God's strength: When all help fails, then Faith rolls it self upon God. So did David, when he was in an helpless condition, *Psal. cxlvi. 4, 5. I looked on my right hand, and beheld; but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* 'Twas so with Jehosaphat, in his distress, *2 Chron. xx. 12. We have no might against this great company, that comes against us, but our eyes are upon thee.* This trusting in God is thus prevalent,

3. Because it keeps us only to use such means for deliverance, as God allows us. Infidelity will make us shift for our selves in unlawful ways. Thus did King Abaz, when God offered him his help, if he would trust to him: He would not rest on him; but sent to the King of Assyria, who helped him not. Engage thy self in any wicked way, and thou dost disengage God from protecting, and saving thee. He gives his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in thy lawful ways, not in thine extravagant adventures upon sinful courses to save thy self. Our trusting in God is thus prevailing,

4. Because it teaches us to rely on him without limitation: Neither prescribing time, or way, how, or when he should deliver us; but leaves all to him in an holy submission. A Christian will not rely upon God in a Bethulian confidence: If God will save us within such a time, we will wait upon him; if not, we will shift for our selves, comply with any other means of help. No; Faith will say, 'Tis good to trust, and to wait for the salvation of God, *Lam. iii. 16. He that believes, will not make haste; but stay God's leisure.*

The third Motive, why God delivered them, is,

III. *Quia constantes*; because they were constant in their Religion. That is express'd in these words, *They have changed the Kings word.* They would not be over-born by the King's Command, and to sin against God. Some Translate it, *Secundaverunt verbum Regis*; they esteemed it in the second place, as inferiour to the Word and Commandment of God. I; this is a good Trial of our constancy in God's Service: When God's Law calls one way, and man's Law calls another way, 'tis Piety then, not to obey men, that we may obey God. 'Twas the resolute Answer of the Apostles to the unlawful commands of the Jewish Rulers, *Acts. v. 29. We ought to obey God rather than men.* We must obey our superiours in subordination to God, not in opposition against God: *Non debet minor potestas irasci si major prelatata est.* Aug. *Da veniam imperator; tu carcerem, Deus gehennam minatur.* Excuse me, O Emperour; thou threatnest death, but God threatneth damnation. There is greater duty, and greater safety to obey God rather than man.

And the expression, 'tis observable.

1. 'Tis *immutaverunt*, 'tis not *contempserant*. They changed the King's word; but they did not contemn it. *Non contempne potestatem, sed elige majori servire.* They did not perform the King's command; but yet they did not contemptuously scorn it. They brought no railing accusation, they spake not evil of Dignities; but revered that authority, which they durst not obey. See this spirit of meekness, and reverence in Christ's Disciples, towards their Superiours, though wicked men. The two Disciples, that went to Emmaus, speaking of the Jews, their murdering of Christ, how do they express it? *The chief Priests, and our Rulers, condemned him to death,* Luke xxiv. 20. They mention not them with any reproachful Language; use words of reverence, and due acknowledgment.

2. 'Tis *immutarunt verbum Regis*, 'tis not *immutarunt statum Regis*: Disclaiming his Authority, renouncing their Loyalty, and Allegiance to him. The Traytours of this day took another course with their King. If they could not make him change his word, in forbidding their Superstition, they would force him upon another change. Crown, and Kingdom, and Life, and all, must be changed; and the whole Nation cast into a woful desolation.

So then, here is the proof of their constancy, *They changed the King's word, and would not fulfil it.*

Then,

Serm.II.

Then,

First, The enquiry must be, *How they are said to change the word of the King?*I. *Non contempserunt; ut supra.*II. They did not *change the King's word*, by disclaiming his Authority, saying, that he was not their lawful Sovereign, but an Heathen, Idolatrous Prince. 'Tis the doctrine of the Church of Rome, That *Pagan, or Heretical Princes have no right to Govern.* Nay, one of them saith, That Christ, by that speech of his, Mark x. 42. *The Great ones amongst the Gentiles exercise authority over them, but so it shall not be amongst you,* doth utterly abolish all Civil Government, and destroys Magistracy. This,1. 'Tis a Doctrine contrary to the practice of St. Paul; who acknowledged *Cæsar* to be his lawful Sovereign, and appealed to him, as to his supream Judge, Act. xxv. 10. *I stand at Cæsar's Tribunal, where I ought to be judged: I appeal unto Cæsar.*

2. 'Tis a Doctrine contrary to the practice of the Primitive Christians; who obeyed, and prayed for Heathen Princes, for their life, and prosperity.

3. 'Tis a Doctrine contrary to the practice of Christ himself; that submitted to *Pontius Pilate*, the Emperour's Deputy, acknowledged his authority to be given him from Heaven.Secondly, The enquiry must be, *How may Christians do thus, follow this example, change the word of their Superiours, refuse to obey them?*1. It must be in Case of manifest opposition to God's holy Laws, and Commandments. When our earthly Governours command that, which God's Word doth absolutely, and clearly forbid; then we must stick to St. Peter's resolution, *We must obey God rather than men:* But, in seemingly ambiguous Cases, we must yield obedience without quarrellsome disputation. The errors of Obedience in this Case, are, like the errors of Charity, pardonable, and excusable.2. The withdrawing our Obedience must be with protestation of our Loyalty, and subjection. Though this ungodly command we do not do; yet we must not fling off, and *blow a Trumpet*, and cry, with *Sheba*, *What part have we in David? To your Tents, O Israel.*

3. It must be done with submission to the Magistrate's censure, by yielding passive obedience to suffer, when God forbids active obedience: As these holy men did; they yielded their bodies to Torment, without any resistance.

We come to the last Motive, that graciously inclined God to work this deliverance; that is,

IV. *Quia fortes, & Martyres:* they yielded their bodies, that they might not serve, nor worship any other God, but only their own God.

And the goodness of this their pious adhering to God, will appear in two things.

First, In their absolute refusal of this Idolatrous Command.

Secondly, In their ready yielding to the penalty of it, upon their refusal.

First, See the fulness of their refusal.

I. They were not enjoined any denial or renouncing of their own God, a giving over of their Religion; but only there was required of them a joint acknowledgment of another God with him. They were not forbidden to worship the God of their Fathers; but required to worship also the God of *Nebuchadnezzar*: yet that they refused.II. Their Piety appears in that, they would not perform so much as one act of unlawful, and superstitious worship, not yield to the King in doing of one Idolatrous action. It may be connivence might have been used afterwards; do it but now, at the great Solemnity, ye may forbear hereafter. No; a good Christian will not yield to the doing of any one act of superstitious Worship. Thus the Primitive Christians refused to cast in a little Frankincense into the fire upon an Idolatrous Altar. *Non licet exigua tuius impensa.*

III. They

III. They refuse to do any outward bodily adoration, to honour this Idol with an outward gesture, by bowing, or bending to it. Many a Politician would say, *What great harm in such a gesture?* to put off my Hat, or to bend my knee only, so I keep my heart true to God? Why? God is a Spirit: if I worship him in Spirit, all will be well, though I yield my bodily reverence to an Idol. True, God is a Spirit.

1. *Sed tu non es Spiritus.* Thy Body must do homage to him, as well as thy Soul.

2. *Frater non est Spiritus.* Thy Brother, he is not only Spirit. If he sees thee worship an Idol, thou layest a scandal for his ruine.

3. *Deus fecit corpus.* God made thy Body, as well as thy Soul, and so requires the integrity of Soul, and Body, as due to him. And such was the Piety of these holy men, they reserve all to God, deny all to an Idol. 'Twas David's resolution, I will not name the Name of Idols, give not the least honour to them, *Psal. xvi. 4.*

IV. They are not moved with the general example, and concurrence of all others, can be content to be accounted singular, and bear the scorn, and reproach of a dissenting multitude. *Non erubescunt paucitate sua.* The crowd shall not carry them away; as he said, that went to Mass, *Eamus ad communem errorem,* Let's yield to the common error. No; the Torrent, and Stream of the common practice shall not carry them to Idolatry.

V. They will not yield, though to avoid, and escape an imminent, and a deadly danger. They will not admit of the least Worship of an Idol, to escape the greatest Torment. They will not suffer only some petty Penalties, and Amerciaments: no, Life it self, it's not dear to them; but they will lose it for their God.

So then, will not these men join the Worship of an Idol together with the Worship of their own God, and that not in the least degree, nor yet to avoid the greatest Torment? The Point from hence to be learned, and practised, is thus much, That *No false Worship is to be joyned with the Religious Worship of the true God.*

First, This Truth was typified in the Levitical Law, *Levit. xix.* where all blending, and mixture of divers Religions are Typically forbidden. They were not to sow their land with divers sorts of seeds, *Verse 19.* What did that signifie? God abhors a misceling Religion. *They were not to plow with an Ox, and an Ass;* that is, we must not draw in the same Yoak with Idolaters, not be Yoak-fellows with them in their Religion. They were not to wear garments made of Linnen, and Woollen; one threed made it unlawful: God will not endure a Linse-Woolse Religion. They were not to suffer Beasts of divers kinds to engender together; 'tis monstrous, and unnatural: God will not endure a mongrel Religion. By all which, Communion with Idolaters is forbidden; and purity, and simplicity, and sincerity in the Worship of God is prescribed.

Secondly, This was represented in that Destruction, that God brought upon Dagon, the Idol of the *Philistines.* The *Philistines* placed the Ark of God in the Temple of Dagon: God would not endure any such neighbourhood, or conjunction. God will not become an Inmate to an Idol, nor have his Worship lodge under the same roof. What saith God in *Ezekiel, xliii. 8.* *They shall not set their Thresholds by my Thresholds, nor their Posts by my Posts.* He abhors any bordering of Idolatry near his Worship. Thus God evidences his displeasure in these mixtures of Religion in them that practised it. *2 King. xvii. 33.* 'tis said, *The People feared the LORD, and yet served other Gods: therefore God sent Lions amongst them, that destroyed the People.*

Thirdly, This mixture in Religion, to serve the Lord, and yet withal to conform to the Worship of any other God, 'tis contrary,

I. To the Unity of God. Deny his Unity, and ye deny his Deity. *The LORD is one, and his Name is one,* saith the Prophet *Zechary, Chap. xiv. 9.*

II. 'Tis contrary to his Sovereignty. He is the only Ruler, the only Potentate, *1 Tim. vi. 15.* *To him only must all knees bow;* all Creatures must do him homage.

III. This Worship of any other God, but only of the true God, 'tis contrary to the All-sufficiency of God. The Heathens worshipped several Gods, as thinking several Gods did bestow several blessings. They begged Health of one God, Wealth of another, Victory of a third God; thus imagining to themselves several Deities

for

Serm. II.

for several supplies. But our God is abundantly able to supply all our wants. Their God is but a *Jupiter*, a partial helper, an *Auxiliary God*; whereas our God is *Jebo-vah*; an All-sufficient bestower of all good things. *He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask, or think*, Eph. iii. 20. How ill did God take it of *Ahaziah*, King of *Israel*, that he sent to *Baalzebub*, the God of *Ekron*, for recovery of his health? What saith God to him by his Prophet *Elias*? *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of the God of Ekron?* It cost him his life for it, 2 *King*. i.

IV. This joyning other Gods with the true God, 'tis opposite, and contrary to the nature of Religion; that leads us to the worship of one only God. God commanded his People to use one Altar, in Sign and Testimony of one God to be worshipped. Hence it is, that,

1. Religion, 'tis *Vinculum*; it puts a Bond upon us, ties us strictly to the adhering to one God alone.

2. Religion, 'tis *Pactum*, a Covenant, and indenting our service, our strength, our devotion only to our God. *We cannot serve God, and Mammon*, saith Christ. God requires all, will not share with any other God.

3. Religion, 'tis *Matrimonium*; Religion doth Espouse us, and Marry us to God. Saint Paul tells us, he hath *Esoused us to one Husband*, that he may present us a chaste Virgin unto Christ, 2 *Cor*. xi. 2. And what saith God to his People? *Hosea* iii. He complains of them, that they look to other Gods; but he saith unto them, *Verse* 3. *Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee*. God is therefore called a *Jealous God*, impatient of any corival. Yea, this is the Chastity of Religion, to cleave only to God. Pagans and Heathens, they are for any, for many Gods; but Piety knows no other, but one. Hence it is, that the Idolatry of the Heathen is compared in Scripture to simple Fornication; but the Idolatry of Gods people is compared to Adultery; because they are wedded to God in spiritual matrimony. Thus God charges Idolatrous *Israel* with this sin of Adultery; *Thou hast not been as an Harlot; but as a Wife that commits Adultery, which taketh strangers, instead of her husband*, Ezek. xvi. 31, 32.

We have seen the refusal of these men to worship any other God, but only their own God; yet one thing remains, that's their ready yielding themselves to undergo the penalty, and to suffer Martyrdom. They yielded their bodies, would undergo death, rather than commit Idolatry

And this their yielding hath four things observable in it.

I. It is passive; they yield themselves to be put to death; they did not rush upon death by their own procurement. It was the practice of some mis-believing Christians, as the *Donatists*, rather than they would conform to the Religion enjoined, they would make away, and destroy themselves. No; that's not lawful: we must not have our hands in our own destruction. *Cyprian* tells the Christians in his time, that were ambitious of Martyrdom, *Non est in tua potestate, sed in Dei dignatione martyrium*. We must not run to it, till God calls us to it. Christian Fortitude is seen *non in aggrediendis, sed in sustinendis periculis*: do not incur persecution; but patiently undergo it.

II. Their yielding their bodies, 'tis submissive: they yielded themselves, did not stubbornly oppose, and struggle against it. *David* and *Paul* compare the sufferings of Martyrs to the butchering of Sheep; *For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*, Rom. viii. 36. Christians suffer as sheep, not as Lions, or Tygers. Yes; here is the patience of the Saints. As 'tis said of Christ, *Isaiah* liii. 7. *He was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before the Shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; but only to pray for his persecutors*.

III. Their yielding was plenary, and full. They yielded their bodies; they were not content to undergo some less sufferings, the loss of their places, which were great in the Province; but they engage their lives for the honour of their God. Satan set a stint to *Job's* suffering; he thought he might suffer some other losses, and still hold his integrity: but, if it came to touch his bone, and his flesh, then he would shrink. No, saith *Paul*, *My life is not dear to me*: he will lay down that to keep his Religion. Canst thou die for thy God: if not, thou art no servant for him.

IV. Their

IV. Their suffering, 'tis voluntary. Yielding, betokens a willing parting with, and resigning up their lives. They were passive in the incurring of death; but active in the acceptance. Even enforced sufferings are made voluntary by our acceptance of them. Thus Christ Catechised the two sons of Zebedee; *Can you drink of the Cup, that I must drink of? and be baptized with the Baptism, that I must be baptized with?* the cup of Martyrdom, the Baptism in blood? Yes, they answer, they were willing to undergo it. See how willing Paul was to suffer Martyrdom; *If I be offered up, upon the sacrifice, and service of your Faith, I joy, and rejoyce with you all*, Phil. iii 17. 'Tis St. Peter's exhortation, *Let none suffer as an evil-doer; but, if ye suffer as Christians, be not ashamed, but glorifie God in this behalf*, 1 Pet. iv. 16.

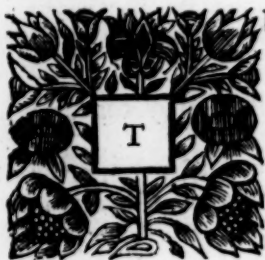


ON THE GUNPOWDER-TREASON.

The Third Sermon.

Micah VI. 5.

O my People, remember now what Balak, King of Moab, consulted, and what Balaam, the Son of Beor, answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the Righteousness of the LORD.



THE Chapter, 'tis a Pathetical Expostulation of God with his Chosen People of the Jews for their ungracious demeanour and miscarriage towards him.

And this Expostulation is carried in a gracious manner. He proceeds not against them *summo jure*, uses not the advantage of his Royal Prerogative, charging them with Sin, and presently punishing; but tempers his proceeding with much moderation, condescending to them by way of Debate and Parley; and submits his Cause and Complaint to

Trial. The Prophet calls it here a *Controversie*, Verse 2. *Moses* terms it *querela fœderis*, the quarrel of his Covenant, Levit. xxvi. 25. gives them leave, and liberty to charge him, if they can, and discharge themselves. Thus he dealt with Job; *Gird up thy loins like a man, and I will demand of thee, and answer me*, Chap. xxxviii. 3. Thus also he proceeds with the Jews, Jerem. ii. 9. *I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your childrens children will I plead*. Surely, 'tis a marvellous vouchsafing of God, thus to lay off his Majesty. Saint Augustine * observes the great mansuetude of Christ in that Speech, *Which of you can accuse me of Sin?* That he, that came to save Sinners, should put himself to this trial of his Innocency: See, if any man can charge him with any Sin; to descend from his Tribunal, to refer the Cause to be judged, and debated, and to suffer us to answer what we can for our selves. *Ut Justitia punire videatur, & non potestas*, saith Salvian: That if he punishes us, it may appear, 'tis Justice, that afflicts us, and not Power and Strength only. It should teach us to provide our selves, how to answer God in these Debates and Controversies, when he comes to reckon with us, and to write bitter things against us. Consider, saith Christ, *Whether thou canst meet him that comes against thee with twenty thousand*; or else send Ambassadors for Peace, and

* Tract. 42. in
Evang. Joan.

Serm. III. try if thou canst turn this Debate and Controversie, into a Treaty of Pacification. Now, in this Chapter, God pleads the Justice and Equity of his Cause by a three-fold Argument :

First, By an Attestation of the dumb, and senseless Creatures, *Vers. 1.* *Contend thou before the Mountains, and let the Hills bear thy voice.* Thus *Isaiah* begins God's quarrel with his People, *Hear O Heavens, hearken O Earth.* And God pleases to use this Attestation of the Creatures, calls upon them, *ut Testes Benignitatis*, as Witnesses of his goodness to his People. 'Tis an usual Evidence that God makes of his gracious Proceedings, to call to witness the whole Frame of the Creation. And may he not take the like course with us? Surely, his blessings upon this Nation have been so evident, that if we should forget, or deny them, or deface the Records, and Monuments of them, the dumb Creatures would rise up, and bear witness of them. *If these should hold their peace, the Stones would cry, saith Christ.* The Stones in the street will testify his Mercy in ceasing of Plagues, and Sickneses from amongst us. The Waves of the Sea will witness our Deliverance in *Eighty Eight.* The Stone out of the Wall will cry, and the Beam out of the Timber will answer, and record this Day's glorious salvation from the Powder-Treason.

Secondly, a second Argument of God's goodness towards them, 'tis by an Appeal and Reference he makes to themselves. He desires no other Judges, or Witnesses; but the Verdict of their own Consciences, and the impartial confession of their own hearts. He refers it to themselves to testify, whether his ways towards them have not been Mercy and Truth. *O my People, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me;* *Vers. 3.* If I have failed in any Promise, been wanting to thee in any Mercy, not performed all that good word which I have spoken to thee. I; Here is the triumph of God's Cause. *He cannot but be justified when he is judged,* his Adversaries themselves being Witnesses, and self condemning Judges. Our Tongues may deny it, as those at the *day of Judgment, When did we do so, and so?* but our Hearts will condemn us, and justify God's just, and holy, and gracious proceedings.

Thirdly, A third Argument of God's goodness towards them, is by a particular commemoration of many Blessings bestowed upon them. And he insists upon three main Fundamental Blessings; by all which he manifests his favour towards them, and aggravates their impiety, and ingratitude against him.

The benefits are all Mercies of the first Magnitude, all necessarily concurring to the making up of a Nation's happiness.

First, The first is *Gratiosa redemptio.* He found them not a Nation, or Free People; but he made them so: he rescued, and delivered them from slavery, and bondage. *Vers. 4.* *I brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants.* And it was a great redemption.

I. 'Twas a Redemption from a long, and tedious bondage; not like that of the *Babylonian Captivity*, for seventy; but for hundreds of years.

II. 'Twas a grievous and miserable bondage; they were worn out with labour, oppressed with drudgery.

III. 'Twas a vile and base bondage; a slavery to slaves. The *Egyptians* were *Cham's* Posterity, and he was cursed to be a *servant of servants.* Surely, redemption from such a bondage, 'twas a great Mercy, never to be forgotten; an Obligation it was of an eternal Duty. *Thou hast saved us from our enemies, be thou King over us.*

This is our Case just. Our God hath freed us not only from Satan, that spiritual *Pharaoh*, and Furnace of Hell; but from *Romish Pharaohs*, Tyrants of souls and bodies. We may take up the Prophet *Isaiah's* Confession in his twenty sixth Chapter, *O Lord, our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but they are dead, — thou hast destroyed them, — and thou hast increased the Nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the Nation.* That's the first Mercy, a gracious Redemption.

Secondly, The second is *Gratiosa gubernatio*; the placing a gracious Administration; and Government, over them: that's a further increase, and addition of Mercy. Otherwise, to free them from bondage, and leave them to themselves, in a lawless, unbridled,

unbridled, licentious liberty, it had been a greater misery. Much better to live under bad Governours, than under none at all. Tyranny is a better condition than a lawless Anarchy. Hear what the Scripture saith, *There was no King in Israel, and every man did that which was good in his own eyes.* Why? so we would have it, do what we list: Well, mark what comes of it; that Speech is thrice repeated in this Book of Judges, as a reason of three outrageous Villanies. *Micha* and his old doting Mother, must needs up with an Idol; and up it went. The reason is given, *There was no King in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes:* Come to the Church, or stay at home, follow any Seducer, embrace any Religion, though never so erroneous. Again, 'tis repeated as a reason of Robbery, and Burglary. The *Danites* break into an house: What was the reason of that? *There was no King in Israel;* every man went to plunder and spoil. Yet again, that Speech is repeated: there was a horrible Rape committed; a Woman violently, and shamefully abused: How came that to pass? what was the reason of that? The Spirit of God gives this for a reason, *Judg. xix. 1. There was no King in Israel.* Well; the Text tells us, God provided against this mischief, he sets over them Rulers, and Governours according to his own heart. *I sent before thee, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Moses,* the supreme Magistrate, God invested him with Royal Authority; *Moses commanded us a Law*——he was a King in *Jesurun, Deut. xxxiii. 4, 5.* a wise, a gracious, a vigilant, and careful Leader, and Governour over them. Nay, he did not only frame them into a Common-wealth, set a Civil Magistrate over them; but he provided for their Souls, pitched his Tabernacle amongst them: he sent before them *Aaron* the High-Priest, to teach them, to be for them in all things concerning God, and to pray for them; and withal joined to him *Miriam* a Prophetess, for extraordinary assistance in that Ministration. Thus he made them a Royal Priest-hood, an holy Nation, his own pleasant plant.

And hath he not dealt thus graciously with us also? First gave us *Queen Elizabeth*, a *Miriam*, a *Deborah*, a Mother in our *Israel*; then gave us *King James*, a wise, a learned, a gracious Governour; and then established a blessed Successour on his Throne; *The Light of our Eyes, the Breath of our Nostrils, the Crown of our Head, his dear Anointed*; and then, made us not only a Nation, but a Church too, provided *Aarons*, and *Eleazars*, the sound of whose Bells, the smell of whose Pomegranates hath continued amongst us; Reverend Prelates, and Pastors, holding up a blessed light of Truth to us. Well; let *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, murmur and mutiny, we will take up *King David's* thankful acknowledgment in the seventy seventh Psalm, *Thou leddest thy People like a Flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* That's the second Blessing, a gracious Government.

Thirdly, The third Blessing is, *gratiſa protectio.* He having freed them from bondage, and settled them under an happy, and holy Government, he watches over them, against all attempts of their malicious enemies. 'Tis not sufficient to be once rescued, and settled in peace, Satan dogs them still, stirs up, and suborns treacherous spirits to conspire their ruine: and here we see God interposes, and defends them. Lest any man assail them, he watches over them day and night. He defeated *Balak*, and *Balaam's* conspiracy. And this makes up the full sum, and measure of God's goodness to his people.

And this was our Case too; we had a *Balak*, and a *Balaam*, the *Pope*, and his Complices, that plotted our ruine, contrived our destruction; which makes this Text to be a Text in season. This Scripture, 'tis this day fulfilled. *Let us remember what Balak consulted, and what Balaam answered, that we may understand the righteousness of the LORD.*

The Text then, 'tis a Commemoration of God's gracious protection, in delivering his People from a mischievous intendment, that was plotted against them. In it take notice of three particulars.

First, The Commemoration it self, in these words; *O my People, remember.*

Secondly, The Benefit and Blessing to be commemorated; and that stands upon two Evidences.

First, Is the Danger that beset them: that's in these words; *What Balak, King of Moab, consulted.*

Serm. III. Secondly, Is the Issue out of this Danger, which God gave to them: that's in these words; *What Balaam, the Son of Beor, answered him.*

Thirdly, The End and Purpose, both of the Deliverance, and of the Commemoration of it; *That ye may understand the righteousness of the LORD.*

Come we,

First, To the act of Commemoration; *O my People, remember now.* And here offer themselves two things considerable;

First, Here is a gracious Compellation; *O my People.*

Secondly, Here is a forcible quickning of their Memory to recount their deliverance; *Remember now.*

First, Here is a gracious Compellation; *O my People:* and it imports three things.

I. It is a speech of Claim, and Possession: He challenges them to be his People, avoucheth his right, and interest in them. They have estranged themselves from him, all the sort of them, and set up other Gods to themselves; both *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*, had their High-places, and Idolatrous Worship; they are charged with it, *Chap. i. 5.* What then? God here makes them know, they are his People still; his right is indefeasible. We may forfeit our right in God; but we cannot make void his right in us. We may deprive our selves of the comforts, and benefit of his Covenant; but we cannot free our selves of the bond, and duty, and obligation of it. It sets an indelible Character upon us. In *Ezekiel's* time the People took themselves free to forsake the Lord, and choose other Gods; but what saith God to them? *Chap. xx. 32.* — *That which cometh into your mind, shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the Heathen, as the Families of the Countreys, to serve Wood, and Stone. As I live, saith the LORD God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. Verse 37. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant.* 'Tis too late for us to choose a new God, we are engaged to the LORD in a bond of Covenant, of his own drawing, and he will hold us to it.

II. *O my People;* 'Tis a speech of Love, and Affection. As the former sense will drive them to him, so this will draw them: here is not only the bonds of right, but the cords of Love, the stirring of his Bowels, the melting of his compassions, and affection towards them. There was a time, when, in his displeasure, he would not thus own them; but thrust them from him, *Exod. xxxii. 7.* *The Lord said to Moses, Thy People, which thou broughtest out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.* He disclaims them there from being his any more: *Populus iste, This People, and Populus tuus, Thy People;* words of estrangment, and alienation. But this Scripture offers more Grace. He cannot smother, or conceal his tenderness over them. 'Tis good to lay hold on this Compellation; 'tis all we can shew for any blessing we expect, that he pleases to have a favour to us, and to esteem us his own. As the *Syrians*, when the King of *Israel* said, *My Brother Benhadad*, they catch'd at that speech of grace, and presently replied, *Thy Brother Benhadad. I will say unto them, Thou art my People; and they shall say, Thou art my God, Hosea ii. 23.* Were it not for this, what reason can be given of so long forbearance, of so many deliverances, with which he hath bless'd us? Less sins in others have brought destruction; why do we escape? 'Tis because he bears a favour unto us. As *David* gave *Joab* charge, *Spare my Son Absolom, entreat him gently for my sake;* he was his Darling: so God gives a charge to his Judgments, that he sends upon us, not to destroy us. Why? We have been his Darling Church, *the People of his good pleasure.*

III. *O my people:* 'Tis a speech of Recall, and Invitation, wooing them by this compellation to return unto him. They have wretchedly cast him off, but yet he hath not cast off them. *Return, thou back-sliding Israel, and I will heal your back-slidings: Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God, Jer. iii. 22.* Thus God pleads with the *Jews*, *Psal. lxxxi. 8. Hear, O my People, and I will testify unto thee.* And again, *Verse 13. O that my People had hearkned unto me!* So again, God pleads with his People, assures them he hath not cast them off; but there is hope of Mercy, *Isai. l. 1. Where is the Bill of your Mother's divorcement? or, which of my Creditors is it, to whom I have sold you? Unkind Husbands would upon any occasion di-*

force their Wives: unnatural Parents would sell their Children, and pay their debts with them; but yet God invites his People to reconciliation. Nay, though he had divorced them, yet he assures them, he will again receive them. Men might not do so in their divorcements, Jer. iii. 1. *But, though thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me, saith the LORD.* That's the Compellation.

Now follows,

Secondly, The *Memento* he gives them, the quickning of their Memory: *Remember now.* He reports himself to his former dealings, appeals to his ancient mercies, bids them look back to the times of old, bids them *remember the days of the right hand of the most High.*

Observe, 'Tis God's care, and should be ours, to keep a fresh memory of his gracious deliverances. To this purpose, we see, that God still kept these Mercies done to his People upon record, he left them not to their account; but,

I. Filed them up in his Sanctuary, registred them up in his holy Book.

II. To make them the more memorable, they were framed into Songs of Commemoration, that they might be remembered with greater delight. We have *Moses* his Song, and *Miriam* her Anthem. *Isaiah*, he pens a Song of thanksgiving before-hand for the People's Return out of Captivity, Chap. xxvi. *In that day shall this Song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong City: Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.* *David* pens his cv, cvi, cvii. Psalms; they are all spent in recounting of God's glorious Deliverances.

III. God is so carefull they should be remembered, that he makes these Mercies the form of an Oath: *You shall say, The LORD lives, that brought us out of the North-Country, whither I had driven them,* Jerem. xxiii. 8.

IV. More than so, He instituted and founded a Sacrament, as a Religious Commemoration of their deliverance; the Pass-over was ordained to keep in remembrance their freedom from *Egypt*.

And these Remembrances are of special use to us;

1. They are provocations of thankfulness. Memory, 'tis the Monitor, and Prompter of Thankfulness. A forgetfull man is always an unthankful man. *David* confesses this fault in the *Israelites*: *Our Fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies: but provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea.* Why? did they not sing a Song of thankfulness at the Red-Sea? Yes, but they soon forgot it. Present enjoyment of Mercies may affect us for a time, but God looks for more at our hands: not that we should put him off with present acknowledgment; but honour his Mercies with a lasting remembrance of his former Favours. *Hezekiah* (2 Chron. xxxii.) blessed God for his deliverance from death, and penned a Song of it; but his thankfulness continued not, it was not long-lived, and lasting, *He rendred not again according to the benefit done unto him.* What saith *David*? *The LORD hath so wrought his wondrous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.* Especially,

1. National Mercies, that all have a share in. These are not his *Opuscula*, his lesser Works; but his *Opera*, his *Magnalia*, his mighty Works, his marvellous Acts.

2. Fundamental Mercies, as Preservations from ruine and destruction. Such was their Deliverance from *Balak*; such was ours from this day's Conspiracy. Had it taken place, we had not been a Church, a Nation, a Kingdom; but a miserable company of murdered, or enslaved Caitiffs. Such Deliverances challenge a thankful remembrance.

2. These Remembrances, they are Obligations to obedience; and so God intends them. These Commemorations, they are not Exprobrations what God hath done for us, but forcible incitements to duty, and of service. Servant comes *à servando*. Having preserved us, he means not we should live as we list, but devote our selves to his faithful service. *David* makes this the end of all God's Mercies, *That they might observe his Statutes, and keep his Laws,* Psal. cv. 45. 'Tis God's Expostulation with the *Jews*, Jer. vii. 10. *Will ye say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Do ye thus requite the LORD, ye foolish people, and unwise?* Our grand deliverance

Serm. III. rance from Hell, gives a rule for all other deliverances. What was the end of that? Saint Paul tells us, 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves; but unto him which died for them.* He hath therefore saved us, because he means to employ us. Ezra makes this use of their rescue out of Captivity, Chapter ix. *Seeing that thou, our God, hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* And holy Zachary tells us thus much, *That we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve him in holiness, and righteousness all the days of our life,* L. ci. 74, 75.

3. These remembrances of former Deliverances are encouragements for our Faith to relie, and trust unto him for after deliverances. These are the reasonings, and collections of Faith, as we see in St. Paul, 2 Cor. i. 10. *Who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom, we trust, he will yet deliver us.* Thus David argued, and strengthened his Faith; *That God which delivered me from the Lion and the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine,* 1 Sam. xvii. 37. The Psalmist abounds in this experimental confidence, *Psalm. xlv. praying for freedom from enemies, he puts God in mind of his former Mercies, Verse 1. We have heard without ears, O God, our Fathers have told us, what works thou didst in their days, in the times of old.* So *Psalm. xlviii.* he bids them, *mark well his favours to Jerusalem, that they might tell it to the generations following: for this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide unto death.* So again, in the one hundred and sixth Psalm, having recounted Gods former mercies to his People, mark the use he makes of them, *Deliver us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the Heathen.* And *Isaiah* pleads for help upon former experiences, Chap. li. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the LORD, awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.* Art not thou He that delivered us in *Eighty Eight*? art not thou he that saved us from the *Powder-Treason*? Save us now LORD, and help us when we call upon thee.

We now proceed to the

Second thing, the Benefit it self to be commemorated: And therein,

First, Of the Danger that did beset them; that's in these words, *What Balak King of Moab, consulted:* (and for the understanding of this, we must reflect on the Story in the Book of *Numbers*.) and in it consider three things:

I. The Ground of it.

II. The Manner of it.

III. The Matter of this Conspiracy.

I. What was the Ground, why *Balak* did thus seek the ruine, and overthrow of the People of God? Sure, look into that Story, and you will find, it was causeless; he had not any provocation, why he should undertake so wicked a Conspiracy. The *Israelites* had not wronged him, nor any of his People, made no inroad into his Country, no way annoyed him. God had given an expresse charge to the *Israelites* to forbear all kind of Hostility, *Deut. ii. 9. Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in Battel.* For the *Canaanites* to have conspired against the *Israelites*, there might have been some reason, they mean to conquer, and destroy them: but they avoided the *Moabites*, went a far compass about, that they might not damnifie them. What was it then? Surely, here is the portion of God's Church and Children, to be hated, and maligned without cause. What reason had the *Papists* to plot our ruine? They enjoyed the benefit of Subjects, had the protection of the King's Laws: nay, they were eased of many Penalties, some of them preferred to places of Honour. No matter; Malice is reasonless: and Envy seeks the perdition of others, though not at all provoked. That's the Ground of it. Such were those two Assassins in the Book of *Ester*, *Bigtan*, and *Teresb*, that conspired the murder of King *Abasuerus*; What moved them to it? The Text saith, *They were wroth*; fullen, discontented, angry men, that's all the reason. 'Tis like, they thought their Parts were better than their Places: their Abilities fitted them for greater Preferments: 'twas that, which displeased them. They took snuff at their King, and forthwith they will murder him.

II. For the manner of this Conspiracy, that was observable upon three Grounds.

I. It was close and secret: There was no defiance bidden to *Israel*, but this Conspiracy

piracy cunningly carried 'twixt *Balak* and *Balaam*; and the People of God never dreamed of it. And how closely was the Treason of this day hatched, and treated of at *Rome*, in *Spain*, in the *Low-Countrys*, even from *Shittim* unto *Gilgal*, and we in *England* utterly ignorant of it. So in *Eighty Eight*, specious Overtures, and Treaties for Peace were made, when their great Navy was to come against us. 'Twas the Watchman of *Israel* that espied them, and discovered them, and defeated their Counsels. *They digged deep to hide their Counsels from us*; that they might surprize us with sudden destruction.

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2. This Conspiracy, 'twas importunate: *Balak* will have no denial. God first forbids *Balaam* to joyn in this Design, and upon it he refuses. No; he must say no. Nay: Message upon message are sent and dispatch'd, till they have prevailed with him. O the eager, and unwearied importunity of Malice! Persecutions out of ignorance may take an answer, and desist, and give over; as *Saul* that havock'd the Church, when Christ reproved him, cries out, *LORD, what wilt thou I shall do*? But Envy and Malice is endless and infinite. There may be a Truce, but there will never be Peace with the Churches enemies. As it was with the *Syrians*, though vanquished by the *Israelites*, yet, what saith God to the King of *Israel*? *Go, strengthen thy self, and mark, and see what thou doest; for at the return of the year, the King of Syria will come up against thee*, 1 King. xx. 22. How restless have the *Papists* been in their bloody attempts? Our Church may say, with the Psalmist, *Many a time, from my youth, until now*. In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, scarce a year, but a new Treason was hatching: as soon as miscarried of one (as, blessed be God, they miscarried in all) they were quick with another. In King *James's* Time, first *Watson* and *Clark*, two Secular Priests, they plot a Treason; but they were but Bunglers: the *Jesuites* were Crafts-masters at that trade, *skilful to destroy*, Ezek. xxi. 31. and they undertook the *Gunpowder-Treason*. And (as unlikely as it looks) I nothing doubt, but they are busie sticklers in our present Distractions.

3. This Conspiracy of *Balak*, it was expenceful, and costly; he spares for no charges to effect his purpose. He offers large rewards to *Balaam* to joyn with him, and yield his assistance; builds many Altars, offers multitudes of Sacrifices, he will have his will of the *Israelites*, though it cost him dear. Superstition, 'tis no Niggard; but Malice and Envy are profuse, and prodigal. What an offer did *Haman* make, to obtain the slaughtering of the People of the *Jews*? He will give *ten thousand talents of silver to the King's Coffers*, Esth. iii. 9. And how did our *Papists* engage their Estates, waste their inheritances, impoverish their Families, in cherishing, and pampering those cursed, and cursing *Balaam's*, and for the contriving of this horrid Villany? That's the Manner of it. Come we

III. To the Matter of this Conspiracy. And, for our understanding of it, we must (as was said before) have recourse to the relation of it in the Book of *Numbers*; xxii, xxiii, xxiv. Chapters. And in it we may see, and discover,

1. Some strains of Truth; at which *Balak* roved.

2. Some evidences of gross Superstition, and foul Impiety. We will touch them briefly.

i. Take notice of three Truths, implied in this practice of *Balak*.

1. He conceived the *Israelites* stronger than himself; yet he had hope to overcome them, if he could get God to take part against them. He knew a Curse from God upon their strength would expose them to Destruction. Not only Scripture, but Nature teaches us thus much; *That the weakness of God is stronger than men. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?* Job xi. 10. He is the Lord of Hosts, able to overcome all hostility. Get him to go forth with our Armies, and *one shall chase a thousand*. 'Tis all one to him to save with many or with few, 1 Sam. xiv. 6. When he takes against *Jerusalem*, no strength shall rescue it from the *Chaldeans*. Mark what he saith, Jer. xxxvii. 10. *Though ye had smitten the whole Army of the Chaldeans, that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his Tent, and burn this City with fire*. If he blesses us, we shall prosper; if he blasts us, there will be no prevailing. Take this along with you in all your designs: 'Tis *Solomon's* assurance; *There is*

Serm. III. *no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the LORD; Prov. xxi. 30.*

2. A second Truth supposed is, that *The Prophets of God, they are powerful Instruments of denouncing, and inflicting God's Curse upon a People.* Might Balak get Balaam to curse the Israelites in the Name of the LORD, he knew that Curse would take place; God would make it good: *He, whom thou cursest, is cursed.* The Church of God is built upon Gerizim and Ebal too. There he hath commanded a Blessing; from thence he thunders out his Curses and Maledictions. See our Commission for both these, *Isai. iii. 10. Say ye to the righteous, That it shall be well with him, pronounce a Blessing upon him; but say, Wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* So again, *2 Cor. x. 6. We have in readiness to revenge all disobedience.* The confidence of this, made the Kings of Israel, in all their Expeditions, to have recourse to Gods Prophets. If *Moses* let fall his hands, *Amalek* prevails. *Jehosaphat*, he called for *Micaiah*, to consult with him, in his Expedition to *Ramoth-Gilead*; *Saul* to *Samuel*; the three Kings to *Elisba*: King *Joash* calls him, *The Chariots and Horsemen of Israel.* There was a time, in our fore-fathers days, when some Sacrilegious Politicians moved earnestly for the dis-inheriting the Church of her Lands and Revenues; alledging, they would serve to maintain Souldiers in the Kirgs Wars. A stout, and worthy Bishop replied, *If you regard not the Prayers of the Church for God's Blessing in your Wars, pursue your motion:* and that word quelled that motion, and prevented Sacrilege. But we will venture that, and our Souls to boot too.

3. There is yet a third truth in *Balak's* Consultation. See, he esteems this Prophet, as worthy of all honour, and reverence; sends an honourable Embassy to him, meets him with all due regard, counts no preferment too good for him. Even Heathens have acknowledged, and practised this Truth. And yet, what dregs of time have we fallen into! Reverence and Maintenance (*the double honour, that St. Paul claims, as due to them,*) 'tis Ambition to require it, 'tis Superstition to afford it, 'tis Reformation to deny it, and dispoyl them of it. It argues, the World hath a base esteem of Heaven, of Grace, of their own Souls, to vilifie those, that are the Messengers, and Managers of so great salvation.

2. Come we to the Errours in this Consultation. In it these four Obliquities, four Exceptions:

1. *Exception*, It was superstitious. *Whomsoever thou cursest, is cursed.* What though he doth it at all adventures? What though he do it *clave errante*? though God gives no Commission? Yes, that's all one with *Balak*; yea, or no; it makes no matter; he supposes an infallible connexion betwixt this power, and his person: never enquires into the nature of his commission, how it is limited, but *factum valet*. Let *Balaam* speak it, and it shall take place. Whereas the Gift, and Grace of Prophecy, 'tis not habitual, but transient. Sometimes *Elisba* can discover secrets; otherwhile he saith, *The Lord hath not revealed it to me.* So the Office of Blessing, and Absolution, and that other of Binding, and Anathematizing, are not *ad placitum*; but must be regulated, by the warrant of the word. The like Opinion, to this of *Balak's*, have the *Papists* of their *Balaam*, the Pope of *Rome*. They ascribe to him an Infallibility in all things, he is not subject to Errour; an infallibility of judgment in deciding of Controversies, and that, whether he studies it, or not, yet his determination is infallible. A desperate Errour, and leaves that Church in a desperate condition. He that will be infallible, will necessarily prove incorrigible, and so incurable.

2. See here another Exception, It was enforced; that's another Obliquity. *Balak* hath recourse to a Prophet in an exigent, in a supposed extremity. It seems he had no Prophets amongst his own People, took no care for any settled Worship of the true God; but now, at a pinch, he sends a message to *Balaam*, to fetch him from *Pethor*, out of the Mountains of the East: But he hath no constant recourse to the Prophets of God. Here is the guise of the World: In our Adversities, then send for God's Messengers, and crave their help; but in our Prosperity, God's Ministers are the only superfluous creatures, they may be best of all spared. *Saul* for consultation sends for the Priest, with the *Ark of God*, but anon presently dismisses him, ere the Priest had done, bids him withdraw his hand, *1 Sam. xiv. 19.* So *Jeroboam*,

On the Gunpowder-Treason.

roboam, that banisht God's Prophets, and Priests, when his Son was sick, can dispatch his Wife to the Prophet in *Judah*; but otherwise, *Away, thou Seer, prophesie not at Beth-el*. Whereas *David*, though himself a Prophet, he had his *Seers* about him, *Gad* and *Nathan*, they were never from him. The People of *Israel* in their distress, Oh! they cry out for want of God's Ministers; *There is no more any Prophet*, Psal. lxxiv. 9. but, when things went well with them, they never regarded them. In our health, and welfare, we slight them, and set them at naught; but, in our distress, when death draws near, and approaches to us, Oh! then *send for the Minister*; Oh! *how shall we do to be saved*? It were just to answer us, as *Elisba* did the King of *Israel*, *Go to the Prophets of thy Father, and thy Mother*; see, if they can comfort thee.

3. Here is a third Exception, It was corrupt, and mercenary; that's another Obliquity. *Balak* labours to engage the Prophet to be on his side, and to denounce God's curse against his People by rewards: he endeavours to corrupt him with Gifts and Bribes, and so to tie the Holy Ghost to his Purse-strings. O! 'tis a cursed Opinion, as *St. Peter* tells *Simon Magus*, to think, *that the Gift of God can be bought with Money*. *Balaam* had a good mind to *Balak's* large offers: *He loved the wages of unrighteousness*, 2 Pet. ii. 15. But, as bad as he was, he durst not contract with him; *Neque enim pretio ulla res Dei constat*, saith *Tertullian*. *Elisba* abhors even after-gratifications from *Naaman* the Syrian. No, Money bears no sway in matters of God. All the Treasures of the World cannot purchase one Dram of Mercy. We may not bless a wicked man for a whole World. *Simon Magus* mistook his Market, to offer to chaffer with *St. Peter*. But he sped better with *St. Peter's* pretended Successours; they have struck up many a bargain with him, and set all to sale. And not only there hath this Evil prevailed; but even amongst those that are far enough from *Rome*. These two sins, Simony and Sacrilege, they will never give over, till they have eaten out the very heart of Religion. Simony, that's like a lingering Consumption, that wastes by degrees; but Sacrilege, that's like a Pestilential Fever, it destroys all at once. The one, Simony, that's like *Hosea's* Moth, *I will be to Ephraim as a Moth*, that consumes leisurely; the other, Sacrilege, that's like *Hosea's* Lion, *I will be to Ephraim as a Lion*, that tears and takes all away, *Hos.* v. 12, 14.

4. There is yet a fourth Exception, or Obliquity, in *Balak's* consultation, It was perverse, and profane. What's his Plea he makes with *Balaam*? *I wot, that he whom thou blessest, is blessed; and he, whom thou cursest, is cursed*. Is it so? Why then doth he not say, *'Come, and bless me, that I may prosper and prevail*; but, *Come, and curse them, that I may smite them, and overcome them*? It had been more comfortable to have himself blessed, than to have his Enemies cursed. This perverse choice of his, to wish a curse to others, rather than a blessing to himself, bewrays a twofold bad disposition in him.

The First is, Infidelity; his evil heart tells him, he cannot expect a blessing from God: his profane, irreligious heart had no such affiance in God, as to hope for good from him; his guilty conscience tells him, that Blessings belong not unto him. As wicked *Abaz*, when the Prophet *Isaiah* tendered him a Blessing, his unbelieving heart withdrew from it, that he did not accept it. And then, the other evil disposition, that makes him pray not for a blessing on himself, but a curse on his Foes,

Is, Secondly, the Spirit of Envy. And Envy cares not so much for good to it self, as to see harm and mischief befall another. Such a man will spare God in blessing himself, so he may see the man, whom he maligns, cursed by God. Whereas, 'tis the Spirit of a good man to strengthen himself, not by calling for Curses upon others; but by craving, and suing for God's blessing on himself.

We have done with the first Evidence of the Blessing Commemorated, that's the Danger that beset them, *Balak's* Consultation. Come we to the other Evidence of this Benefit; and that is,

Secondly, The Issue out of this Danger, which God gave to them; and that's in these words, *What Balaam the Son of Beor, answered him*.

Serm. III.

And this Answer, that *Balaam* returns to *Balak*, contains God's gracious Deliverance of his People from *Balak's* malicious and wicked intendment. And it is an answer, not as *Balak* wished, nor yet as *Balaam* would have made; but the Answer is Prophetical, over-ruled by God's special guidance and inspiration. And that Answer stands upon three particulars.

I. Here is a strict Prohibition.

II. Here is a gracious Inversion.

III. Here is a just Retortion.

I. This answer consists in a strict, and absolute, and peremptory Prohibition: *Curse them not; there is no Inchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? How shall I defile whom the Lord hath not defiled?* Here have been great preparations, and solicitations, Altars, and Oblations, and all, that Malice and Mischief can devise: but, when all is done, here comes a Prohibition from Heaven. *Rex non vult progredi;* that comes in, and stops the proceedings. 'Twas so with us as on this day. The Vault digg'd, and full fraught with Gunpowder, Altars built, and Masses said to prosper the work; I, and the Match kindled too, our Neck was upon the Block, there was but a step betwixt us and death: and then comes *David's* *Nepherlas* from Heaven; *See thou do it not, destroy them not.* Our Traytors were digging deep; but, here's a sudden damp ariseth in the Mine, it wets their Powder, and quenches their Fire-works. There was a Watcher, and an Holy One, came down from Heaven, dashed all presently. Thus God quenched those two smoaking Fire-brands, *Isaiah. vii. 7. It shall not be, neither shall it come to pass. Curse them not.* Why? He might have suffered them to curse, and yet *Balak* and *Balaam* had been never the near. *As the Bird by wandering, and the Swallow by flying; so the curse causeless shall not come:* *Prov. xxvi. 2.* True; but yet God will bridle the mouths of wicked men; they shall not be able to do, nay, not to speak evil against his Church. *See thou speak nothing but good to Jacob, saith God to Laban.* Let *Laban* come with all his Train one way, and *Esaú* with his four hundred at his heels another way, both to assault *Jacob*, God doth not only manacle their hands; but muzzles their mouths too, they shall not utter a bad word to him. That's the First; the Answer is a peremptory Prohibition, *Prov. xvi. 1.*

II. This Answer hath more in it; here is a gracious Inversion. *Balaam* shall not Curse, that's not all, he shall be made to pronounce a Blessing upon them. Here is the Crossing of the hands indeed. *I sent for thee to curse mine Enemies, saith Balak to Balaam, and lo, thou hast blessed them altogether.* *Moses* reminds them of this gracious Inversion, *Deut. xxiii. 5. The LORD, thy God, would not hearken unto Balaam: but the LORD, thy God, turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD, thy God, loved thee.* See how God inspired *Balaam*, made him an Instrument of blessing his People. How many magnificent Prophecies did he make him to utter, of *Israel's* Prosperity; He foretels the Kingdom of *David*, nay, of *Christ* himself. He pours out *pluviam Benedictionum*, he showers down Benedictions, and Blessings on the Lord's Inheritance. Still we see the malignity of the Churches Enemies is a Motive to God, to multiply Favours and Mercies upon them. *Let them curse, but bless thou, saith David, Psal. cix. 28.* Nay, because they would curse, therefore God blesses. Thus *David* comforted himself, when *Shimei* curs'd him; *It may be the LORD will look upon mine afflictions, and that the LORD will requite good for his cursing this day; 2 Sam. xvi. 12. The LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine Enemies, and upon them that hate thee, which persecuted thee, Deut. xxx. 7.* Thus dealt he with his People in *Egypt*; the more *Pharaoh* havocked them, the more God multiplied, and increased them, and made them stronger than their Enemies; *in the things wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them; Exod. xviii. 11.* *David* takes notice of this way of God's working, taking these advantages of the Churches Enemies; Surely (saith he) the wrath and fury of man shall turn to thy praise, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain, *Psal. lxxvi. 10.* Here is another Moral of *Samson's* Riddle, *Out of the eater came meat, Out of the strong came sweetness:* Out of the mouth of a cursing Enemy, God

God hath ordained a blessing, that *he might still the enemy and the avenger.* We *Serm. III.* may take up *Joseph's* Speech to his malicious Brethren, that sought his ruine; *Vos cogitastis malum; Deus autem vertit in bonum.* They meant to mischief us, and God over-rules it to the magnifying of his Mercy on us.

III. Here is yet more in this Answer of *Balaam*; here is a just retortion. The Curse, that *Balak* would have brought upon *Israel*, 'tis fallen upon himself, and his own People. God over-rules the mouth of *Balaam* to foretel the ruine of *Moab*, which sought to ruine the People of God. Hear what *Balaam* doth prophesie against them: *There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the Children of Sheth;* Numb. xxiv. 17. Nay, his Prophecy comes nearer to us. Expositours observe, he foretels the ruine of *Rome*, *That also shall perish for ever*; Verse 24. I, here is the triumph of God's Mercy to his Church: they that would ruine it, shall ruine themselves. *Whosoever shall fall on this Stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder,* Matth. xxi. 44. His mischief (saith *David*) shall come down upon his own pate, Psal. vii. 16. *David's* Prayers have prevailed for us too, Psal. cxlii. 10. *Let the wicked fall into their own nets; whilest that I withal escape. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him,* Psal. cix. 17.

Come we to the

Third Particular; the End and Purpose of this gracious Deliverance, *That ye may understand the righteousness of the LORD.*

I. Not our own righteousness; 'twas not that, that enclined God to deliver them. *Moses* enters a Caveat against any such conceit, Deut. ix. 4. *Speak not in thine heart, 'Tis for my righteousness, that God hath done it.* Never speak it, never think it; we have been an unrighteous People; we may take up *Daniel's* Confession, *O Lord, righteousness belongs unto thee, but unto us shame and confusion, as at this day: And Ezra's* acknowledgment, *O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous; for we remain yet escaped as it is this day: Behold, we are before thee, in our trespasses; for we cannot stand before thee, because of them,* Ezra. ix. 15. 'Tis not our righteousness.

II. 'Tis the Lord's righteousness which works the deliverance. Why not his Mercy? as *Jeremy* pitch'd upon that; *'Tis the tender Mercies of the Lord, that—'* 'Tis so; but this adds a new strength to his Mercies. Mercies promised, and assured to his Church, the performance of those is faithfulness, and righteousness. His dealings with his Church are founded in mercy, but performed in righteousness. He sends deliverances to others; but they, *puræ misericordiæ*, not only undesired, but unpromised mercies; but his Church hath his Word and Promise. Thus *David*, *Look unto the Covenant; for—* Mark that Covenant, which wrought this deliverance, Gen. xii. 3. *I will bless them, that bless thee; and curse them, that curse thee.*

III. *That we may understand it.* Not only believe it; but understand it, gain the experience of it. Consider it, acknowledge it, feel the comfort, and sweetness of it. Such Deliverances as these, they should beget a good understanding 'twixt God and us. We should learn to know him the better, while we live. Shall other Nations take notice of our Deliverances, and shall not we our selves? As *David*, in Psalm cxxvi. *When the LORD turned again—they said among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them: Shall they understand it, and wonder at it, and shall not we understand, and acknowledge, and say, The LORD hath done great things for us already, wherefore we are glad? As we have heard, so we have seen in the City of our God.*

IV. That we may understand the righteousness of that holy Religion, which he hath honoured with such a deliverance; 'Twas our Religion that was struck at in this Treason, that God sheltered, and gave Testimony to. Oh! let's stick to it. *O, I will love thy Testimonies,* for, with them, and for them thou hast answered me, and saved us alive.

V. That we may understand the unrighteousness of that Religion, that teaches, and practises these hellish Villanies. For this horrid Treason, it was not only plotted by *Papists*, (but yet upon other Motives, and Grounds, and for other Ends)

Serm. III. but it was taught by *Popery*, and undertaken for *Popery*, to set up that again in this Kingdom. When they tell us they act according to Principles, we must look upon this Treason, as the natural Issue of that Religion, and accordingly abhor both Breed and Dam; their Treason, and their Religion, by which it was taught, and for which it was undertaken.

For, as there are in our Christian Religion, besides the Sacred Mysteries, and Sanctity of it, many Evidences of Honesty, and Innocency, which make it lovely, even to a reasonable sober man, though not enlightened with supernatural Grace: As that it forbids all Vice, commands all Vertue, it strictly requires obedience to Magistrates, love, and charity, patience, and humility, *Tir. iii. 1.* it puts us in mind to be subject to Principalities, and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to speak evil of no man, to be ready to every good work; So contrariwise, in *Popery*, besides the Heresies, Idolatries, Superstitions, which it teaches, discernable by a Christian, besides these, there are some unnatural Impieties, and wicked practices of that Religion, which render it a detestable Religion, even to any understanding man; As,

1. Their insatiable Ambition after Dominion, and Supremacy, over all Churches, and Kingdoms: And that the Pope should be an universal Monarch; Emperours, and Kings subject to his controul: That *Peter's* Fish-boat should become a Man of War, and scour the main Ocean, and, his Successor, the Pope, turn Pirate; as 'tis said of *Pope Julius* the Second, that *à remuco ad Pontificatum ascendit*, from a poor Water-man, that tugg'd at an Oar, he became Pope, and Universal Bishop, and Lorded it in the world.

2. Their Equivocation, and Art of Lying, and Forswearing. A Mystery taught by the *Jesuits*; a Practice most opposite to humane Society, that a man may say, and swear the quite contrary to that which he knows to be true.

3. Their dispensations with lawful Oaths; that, when Subjects have sworn their faithful Allegiance to their Kings, to defend them against all opposition, and hostility, yet they teach, that the Pope may disannul this Oath, and dispence with Subjects to rebel against their Princes, and to take up Arms against them.

4. Their plotting of Treasons, and murdering of Princes, accounting it not only lawful, but meritorious, and thank-worthy with God to destroy Princes and Commonwealths, and to raise Seditions, and Tumults at the Pope's beck. Surely, were there nothing but this in *Popery* to be condemned, the scandal it casts upon Christianity, the horrid Villanies it hath caused in the Christian World, would make it abominable. Surely, that Religion, that loves to lap blood, and feed upon the flesh of Kings, and Princes, and raises up it self by the ruins of Kingdoms, that Religion is not of God. 'Tis far from that Religion, which our meek, and merciful Saviour hath taught, and established; most contrary to the Kingdom and patience of *Jesus Christ*, which *St. John* speaks of, *Rev. i. 9.* *Saint Augustine* proclaims it to all the world in the Name of Christ, *Audite, Judæi; audite, Gentes;* (Let *Jews* and *Gentiles*, hear; let *Circumcision*, and *Uncircumcision* hear, let all the Kingdoms of the Earth hear) *Non impedio vestram dominationem in mundo.* Christian Religion is far from disturbing, or embroyling Kingdoms with Wars and Seditions. Let it be the shame, and infamy of *Rome*; and let us ever abhor it, and their Religion for it.

FIVE

SERMONS

PREACHED ON

Christmas-Day.

The First Sermon.

Haggai ii. 7.

I will shake all Nations, and the desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of Hosts.

TH E Text, 'tis a Prophecy, and Prediction of our Saviour's Incarnation, and coming into the World; a Sacred Truth, requiring not only the assent, but the obedience, yea the devotion, and adoration of our Faith. When God was to bring his first begotten into the World, these Prophecies Usher'd him in, and proclaimed before him, as *Pharaoh* before *Joseph*, *ABRECH*, *Bow the Knee*. Let all the Angels of God worship him, let every knee bow down before him, let every Tongue confess him, let every Soul receive, and embrace him.

'Tis true, the incredulous, unbelieving *Jews* labour to obscure, and deface this, and all other Prophecies of Christ, and, by misconstruction to draw them away to another sense. They answer all the Prophets in their Predictions of Christ, as *Isaiab* complains of them, *Ch. xxx. 10. They say to the Seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesie not unto us right things: but prophezie to us deceits.* What *Joseph* did Ignorantly suspect, these blasphemously aver, that the fruit of the Virgins Womb was some adulterous Brood, not the blessed Conception by the Holy Ghost. When ever they meet with these Promises of Christ, they are troubled, as *Herod* was, and the City of *Jerusalem*, at the tidings of his Birth. The Devil, that same *Magnus Herodes*, as *Theodoret* calls him, he assembles a Council of Jewish Priests, to pervert, and elude these sacred Oracles. They seek to destroy Christ, not only, as *Herod*, in the Cradle; but, by perverting these Scriptures, to make an abortive conception of him. These Promises are the seed by which he was conceived; destroy that precious seed of the Holy Ghost, and the Faith of the Church shall conceive the winde, and bring forth a vanity, and travel with a lye.

The *Jews*, they pervert the Text: and some other Expositours mistake it, and draw down the height, and mystery of this Prophezie to an inferiour sense. *Montanus* (that comes nearest of them that fall short) conceives it a Promise of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the coming of that is sometimes foretold; but yet the main Scope of the Prophets was to foretel Christ. *Christus est signaculum omnium Prophetiarum*, saith *Tertullian*. To him give all the Prophets witness. Christ, saith

Serm. I.

saith *Chrysostome*, was πλήρωμα νόμου the Holy Ghost was πλήρωμα εὐαγγελίου. The Father first promised the Son; after the Son he promised the Holy Ghost. He, that is here promised, must rule over the Nations, become an Head, and Deliverer to his Church. Now *Christus* is *Caput*, *Spiritus Sanctus* is *Cor Ecclesiæ*, saith *Thomas Aquinas*.

But generally the most Antient, and Orthodox Interpreters, do fasten their Meditations upon the Text, as a clear, and undoubted Prediction of the Messias his coming, the Manifestation of the great God, and his Appearance in the World.

And this sense we embrace; and so apprehend the Text, as a Prophetical prediction of that great Benefit, and Mytery of our Religion, that the Christian Church doth this day celebrate.

And 'tis of great use to look back to these Prophecies, even after their fulfilling. As the Angel spake to the Woman at the Sepulchre, to confirm them in the Faith of Christ's Resurrection, *See the place where the LORD was laid*; the emptiness of the Grave proved he was risen: so, even after Christ is born, and actually exhibited, 'tis of use to our Faith, to search, and review these Prophecies; the fulfilling of these places will greatly confirm our Faith of his Incarnation. As in your Purchases, and Possessions, though you be seized, and stated in them, ye desire to get in all antient Evidences, and former Conveyances to strengthen your Tenure: so, though now we be possessed of Christ, yet these Prophecies are our Fore-Fathers Records; we claim these Testimonies as our Inheritance, our Faith holds by them.

The History of the Gospel, that's matter of great joy, to hear he is born: but the Prophecies of the Law are great confirmations, to see his coming so clearly foretold. It makes us know, that this was no chance-birth; but conceived in the Womb of Eternity. What was true of *David*, is, in this sense, most true of Christ, *In thy Book were all my Members written*; all the passages, and circumstances of this holy Nativity. Old *Zachary* tells us, all the Prophets, since the world began, did joyntly foretel it. The first Promise to *Adam*, that was the first conception; these after-Prophecies are the articulation, the quickning of the Child in the Mother's Womb. The joy of the Gospel, that's *Simeon's* joy, *exultatio in brachiis*, the Church now holds Christ in her Arms; but the joy of these Prophecies, 'tis like *Elizabeth's* joy, *exultatio in utero*; at the voice of these Prophecies the Babe springs in the Womb. The Faith of the Prophets was *Fides concipiens*; the Faith of the Gospel, 'tis *fides pariens*, the belief of his Birth, and present Nativity.

To reflect upon these Prophecies, and to find them made good, establishes our Belief in all other Truths. *Impleta credimus, impleri videmus, implenda confidimus*. Saint *Augustine* makes it the progress, and improvement of Faith upon these performances. It will put *David's* Song into our mouth: *as we have heard, so have we seen*: heard it foretold, seen it fulfilled. We may sing with the Psalmist, *All the ways of the LORD are mercy, and Truth*: Mercy in promising; Truth in performing. We may confess, with *Solomon*; *Blessed be the LORD, who spake it with his mouth, and hath with his hand fulfilled it*. We may open our Text, as Christ did, *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears*. Our Faith may safely set to its Seal, that *God is true*.

The Text then ye see, 'tis the Prophet *Haggai's* Prediction of our Saviour's Incarnation. And of it let us take a double view, make two Enquiries.

First, *Quæ occasio*? what occasions the Prophet now to mention our Saviour, and foretel his Nativity?

Secondly, *Quæ conditio*? what's the nature, and condition, and substance of the Prophecy?

First, *Quæ occasio*? what makes the Prophet speak of Christ's Birth, and Incarnation? how is it seasonable, and suitable to his present Discourse? Yes, very well: the mentioning, and foretelling of Christ's Incarnation comes in without any straining, or impertinent digression. The Prophet finds the People in a very low, and deserted condition, weeping to see the miserable decays, and the poor repairs of their City and Temple; all their State was at a very low ebb. Indeed now the Tide was turning, they were come out of Captivity; but yet things went so hard with them, such poor beginnings of their Church and State, the Nations about them all maligning,

maligning, deriding, and hindering that work; that the Prophet sets himself to comfort, and encourage them. And the main consolation he ministers to them is this gracious assurance, that the Messiah was ere long to be born, and to come among them. Serm. I.

Such times as these have been the season, that God hath observed in promising of Christ. When his Church, and People have been in affliction; (still we may observe it) when the People of God were at the greatest loss, and perplexity: then the promise of Christ was renewed, and clearly published. In King Abaz his Time, the Syrians made a dreadful War upon Judah, the House of David, all their hearts trembled at it: God sends *Isaiah* to comfort them; and with what Tidings, but with the promise of Christ? *Isai. vii. 14. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son.* So again, *Chap. ix.* the Prophet describes some great affliction lying heavy on the Land, dimness, and darkness, and much tribulation; he revives their Spirits with this blessed assurance, *Verse 7. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.* The Babylonish Captivity, that was a sad and sorrowful time, and the cruelty of *Antiochus*, that havock'd the Church, *Daniel* felt the one, foresaw the other. The Kingdom of the Messiah was then the Promise, that did support them. *I saw one like the Son of Man, and unto him was given Dominion and Glory.* And now, here, God's People are in a sad condition, the Prophet raises up their hearts with this blessed expectation, Christ shall be born to them.

And this Promise of Christ had a threefold Virtue in it, that made it most seasonable in the time of distress.

First, It sweetned their sorrow in their present affliction.

Secondly, It revived their hope of a future restoration.

Thirdly, It set back their fear of final destruction.

First, This blessed Promise was able to sweeten their present affliction, that, though they were in a low condition, yet Christ belonged to them, and they to Christ. The Promise of Christ hath a power of comforting in the greatest sadness. *Herein ye greatly rejoyce, though ye be in heaviness, through many afflictions: 1 Pet. i. 6.* What? though they have nothing, but the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction? Yet their eyes shall see their Saviour. Indeed the times of sorrow are the seasonablest times for Christ to present himself to his Church. His coming, 'tis called a visitation, *Luke i. 78.* And that supposes a state of sorrow, and distress: Not a visitation of courtesie; but of comfort. He visits us, not as a friend only; but as a Physician to help, and relieve us. He is called a consolation; *The consolation of Israel, Luke vi. 25.* Not only *gaudium* but *consolatio*; that's joy upon sorrow, the most welcome joy. *Consolatio non est nisi miserorum, non est nisi gementium, & lugentium, Aug.* All, that were in distress, and in debt; all, whose Souls were in bitterness, had recourse to *David*, and he became Captain to them. *Quando multiplicantur lateres, venit Moses.* When the yoke of their Burthen, and the staff of their Shoulder, and the Rod of their oppressour, was heaviest upon them; then comes Christ to them: *Isai. ix. iv.* That's the reason, saith *Nazianzen*, why Christ was born when the Jews were taxed by *Augustus Caesar*; *ἵνα παρηγορησάτω τὴν δουλείαν ἡμῶν*, to sweeten their Captivity. He is the true *Noah* of his Church. He shall comfort them concerning their labour, and toil of their hands.

This present poverty of the Jews was abundantly supplied by this precious promise; they were poor in possession, but rich in reversion; they had *τὸν ἐν ἐπαγγελίᾳ ἀποκεκρίσιν μαχαρίοντα*, as *St. Basil* speaks, Plenty, and Happiness, stored up in Promises. He is no poor man, that hath rich men for his debtors, though destitute of money: that hath Bonds, and Specialties, and good Debts in abundance. The Promise of Christ, and the hope of Heaven, 'tis the Churches Riches; this assurance will make them bear up in the saddest condition.

Secondly, This Promise of Christ, 'tis now exceeding seasonable, it revived their hope of a full Restoration. 'Tis the Fundamental Promise that gives strength and assurance to all other Promises. Freedom from miseries, temporal deliverances, the welfare of God's People, all these Promises have their force and stability from this grand Promise, that *Christ shall be ours.* From the Root of *David* spring all these

Serm. I. these secondary, and temporary Promises; they are *παραρτῆς*, Sprouts, and Branches of that Tree of Life.

It prevents and removes all doubts and suspitions, that their fear may forecast against their deliverance. Shall their Temple be built again out of so great ruins? *LORD, wilt thou restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* There may be two Doubts of it:

I. *An possit?*

II. *An velit?* And this Promise of Christ satisfies both of them.

I. *An possit?* They doubted much of that. *Can these dead bones live?* saith *Ezekiel*; that is, can the ruins of *Zion* be made up again? Yes; God is a working a greater work, than that comes to, his Son shall be incarnate, *A Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son.* Believe this; and you cannot doubt of the other. Sure, he that can effect this, can *suscitare Virginem Sionis post ruinam*, restore the daughter of *Sion* out of her Captivity. To make a Virgin bring forth, *νόμον φύσας κατὰ φύσιν*, saith *Nazianzen*, it works a change in the course of Nature. How can we question his more easie Promises? Indeed the believe of this Article makes all other Truths more easily credible. The raising of a dead man to life, 'tis a work will pose any natural understanding; but believe Christ's Incarnation, we shall presently yield to the possibility, and Truth of a Resurrection. Christ examines *Martha*, *John xi. 25, 26.* *He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; believest thou this, Martha?* Observe the answer she returns to him, *Verse 27. Yea, LORD, I believe that thou art the Christ that should come into the world.* Her answer may seem impertinent. He questions her about the Resurrection, she professes her Faith in his Incarnation. No, she speaks like a right believer: yield thy Faith to that great work of his Birth, and Incarnation; thou wilt never shrink from the hardest Truths, and most improbable; as this was one, a dead man's Resurrection.

But then there is another Doubt,

II. *An velit?* Will God be thus good to us? Yes; the Incarnation of his Son, as 'tis an argument of his Power, so 'tis the greatest evidence, and proof of his Love. *In him all other Promises are Yea, and Amen.* He that will part with his Son for us, how shall not he with him give us all things also? *Rom. viii. 33.* The Proposition, 'tis not convertible; He may give us other things, but deny us his Son: but this consequence is undeniable: *If his Son be ours, all other things shall be ours also*, the Woman shall be saved, *διὰ τῆς πνευματικίας*. The *Nicene* Council understands it of this day's Birth, as the pledge of their Salvation. *Manoah's* Wife pleads well for her own, and her Husband's safety; *If the LORD would destroy us, he would never have shew'd us these things*, promised us a Child, that should deliver *Israel* from the hand of the *Philistines*, *Judg. xiii. 23.* What God said to *Abraham*, we may say to God: *Now we know that thou lovest us, seeing thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son, from us.* *Ezekiel* assures them, *Jerusalem* shall be built again from this blessed expectation; *The Name of the City, from that day, shall be Jehovah-Shammah, The Lord is there.*

Thirdly, This Promise of Christ is now proper and pertinent; it sets back their fear of a final destruction. Their City shall be built again, and their Temple restored, and the House of *David* have a new establishment; for, from that Linage must the *Messiah* descend; till that Promise be performed, no fear of desolation. *Of Zion it shall be said, He shall be born in her, and the most High shall stablish her, Psal. lxxxvii. 5.* A condemned Woman conceived with Child, is reprieved by the Law, till the Child be born of her, and then afterwards executed. *Jerusalem*, though by Gods just Sentence, devoted to destruction, it was under bail and reprieve, till this promised Seed was born, and exhibited. This Promise secures them of it. *This shall be a sign to you*, saith God to *Moses*, *In this Mount ye shall worship me.* In this Temple shall the *Messiah* be presented, his glory shall appear in it, it shall therefore be built again.

'Twas a great assurance God gave to *Jeremy* of their return from *Babylon*, that he directs the Prophet to purchase lands at *Anathoth*, when the City was besieged; *Fields shall be bought in this Land again, when ye return from Babylon.* God seals here a Bond to his People, and the payment must be tendered, and made in the Temple. Christ must appear there: therefore the Temple shall be restored. Christ's coming

coming in the *Flesh*, was the *ἡ ἀνάγκη*, of the Jews destruction. That day shall not come, till *the mystery of godliness be revealed*. The Son of God, he must sit in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God indeed: till that be accomplished, they were sure of continuance. Serm. I.

That's the First enquiry, *Quæ occasio*? What gave occasion to mention this Promise? Come we to the

Second enquiry: that's *Quæ conditio*? what's the nature, and condition, and substance of this Promise? And for that, conceive the words as a lively description of our Saviour's coming. And it stands upon these particulars.

First, Here is a solemn preparation to it: *I will shake all Nations*.

Secondly, Here is a gracious performance of it: *The desire of all Nations shall come*.

Thirdly, Here is a glorious effect, that shall accompany and attend it: *I will fill this house with Glory*.

Fourthly, Here is a strong, and a full assurance of it: *saith the LORD of Hosts*.

First, Here is a solemn preparation to it: that's a shaking, and concussion of all Nations. His coming shall be with observation. Nay, not only all Nations; but all Creatures shall feel this commotion: *I will shake Heaven, and Earth, saith the LORD*; Ver. vi. The whole frame of the Creation shall be sensible of it. The Gospel of Christ shall be published with as great awe, and solemnity, as ever the Law was. Then the earth trembled, and quaked, Mount Sinai was shaken; and so God promises he will work wonders in heaven, and earth, to make Christ's coming observable: *Tremble thou earth at the presence of God*. When Christ was brought forth, there was *nixus totius Naturæ*. *The Heavens dropt down from above, and the Skies did pour down righteousness; the Earth did open to bring forth Salvation; and righteousness sprung up together*, saith the Prophet *Isaiah*. Truth did bud out of the earth; and the earth wondred at it,

Miratura novum fructum, & non sua poma.

But more especially; here is the stirring of all Nations foretold: *The Inhabitants of the earth shall be moved, and shaken*. What's the purpose of that? what doth the Prophet intend in this Prediction? Surely there were divers shakings of the Nations to make way for Christ's coming, several commotions. Reduce them all to these particulars.

1. The first is *concussio perturbationis*. Before Christ's coming, there was to be amongst the Nations great stirs, and commotions. The Times before Christ, they were troublesome Times; the World was embroiled with tumults and uproars; Nation dashing against Nation, and all subdued by the Roman Empire. *Omnia regna comminuta, & conflata in Romani Imperii summam*, saith the Father: that put a yoke of servitude upon all other People.

2. That's a season for Christ to be born in: when the world is in an uproar; then 'tis most fit for the Prince of peace to manifest himself. Thus David brings him in quieting the Nations, *Psal. xlv. 9, 10*. *He will make wars to cease unto the end of the Earth; Be still, and know I am God, I will be exalted amongst the Heathen*.

3. Then 'twas most seasonable for Christ to come; when his enemies were at the highest: it best befitted him then to set up his Kingdom. When the Romans had subdued all; then Christ sets up his Throne, makes theirs but his Foot-stool. His coming was no surprisal, when they were in their weakness (as the slaughter of the *Sichemites* by *Simeon* and *Levi*, when the People were fore) but a glorious Victory over the greatest strength. *Daniel* foresaw it; he saw the Stone cut out without hands, that smote the Kingdoms of the earth, and brake them in pieces. *Who art thou, O great Mountain, before Zerubbabel? it shall be made plain*. Christ is the true Zerubbabel, the fanner of Babel: the Nations are but as chaff before him.

4. Then 'twas fit for Christ to come; when his Church was at the lowest. The greatest commotions shall bring the greatest good to the Church of God. The Issue will be happy to the Church, it will bring forth a Saviour. Christ compares the troubles of his Church, to the pangs of a woman in her travel; it shall end in joy; a Man-Child shall be born for the Churches deliverance. Thus the Church

Serm. I. comforts her self in the greatest extremities, Psal. xlv. 2. *We will not fear, though the Earth be removed, though the Mountains shake, God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.* In the greatest Tempest that can arise, his Providence guides, and steers his Church with a steady hand. *Sicut Gubernator nunquam manum suam à gubernaculo, sic nunquam curam suam Deus tollit à mundo, faith Salvian.*

1. In all quarrels, and contentions about Truth, the Church is the Gainer: they stir up more diligent enquiries, bring forth more judicious Resolutions. *Ut quod antea simpliciter credebatur, hoc idem postea diligentius crederetur; quod antea lentius prædicabatur, hoc idem postea instantius prædicaretur; quod antea securius colebatur, hoc idem sollicitius excoleretur, faith Lyrinensis.* Heresies are but the File, and Furnace of Truth, make it shine more clearly. Vehement shakings make the deeper rooting. We have no Truths so settled as those that have been most violently opposed.

2. In tumults and persecutions, the Church shall have a most glorious issue. When the Devil rages most, his time is shortest, and Christ's time is nearest. The Churches enemies may have some petty successes; but not wholly prevail. *Vincunt in prælio; sed non in bello.* This is your hour, and the power of darkness, faith Christ; the hour may be theirs, but the day shall be ours. Goliath may brave it for a time, but, when David comes down, and enters the lists, the Philistines shall flee. For a time the Church may go by the worse; but 'tis but the retreat of our General, 'tis not his Flight; He shall return victoriously, and set his feet on the necks of his Enemies. When the War is ended, then view the field, count the dead bodies. The success of Israel against Midian, (Numb. xxxi. 11.) shall betide the Church: not one Israelite lost, not one Midianite saved. *The God of peace shall tread down Satan under our feet.* He shall tread him down, and yet under our feet: the Victory shall be his, and the Triumph ours.

That's the first shaking, *Concussio Perturbationis.*

II. This shaking of all nations, 'tis *Concussio excitationis*; a stirring up the Nations to the expectation, and looking for of the Messiah. God purposely foretold, and forelaid many Signs, and Tokens; in the Accomplishment of which, they might conclude Christ's Birth was approaching.

The Jews they were furnished with their Prognosticks. All their Prophecies pointed at him; all, like Lines, met in this Center. *Christo prædicendo omnes Prophetarum pagine invigilant;* faith St. Augustine. He is the Title of every Book, and every Page bears this Inscription; *Salutem in Christo.* In the Volume of thy Book, it was written of me. What Place is there meant, say the Expositors? They conclude the Psalmist meant no one Text: but that the whole Volume of Scripture did prophesie of Him. He was the Sum, and Scope of all their Predictions. He was Adam's promised Seed, Abraham's Isaac, Jacob's Shiloh, Moses's great Prophet, Isaiah's Immanuel, Jeremiah's Man compassed by a Woman, Ezekiel's Shepherd, Daniel's Holy one, Zechariah's Branch, Malachi's Angel; All of them Predictions to foretel his coming.

All their Types, and Ceremonies pointed at Him. He was Abel's Sacrifice, Noah's Dove, Abraham's First-fruits, Isaac's Ram, Jacob's Ladder, Moses's Pass-over, Aaron's Rod, the Israelites Rock, the Patriarchs Mannah, David's Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple. All of these prefigured his Incarnation. They were *Fasciæ infantis Jesu*: all as Folds, and Swathing-bands of this Babe Jesus.

All their Kings Figures of this great King, and Prince of our Salvation. All their Judges, and Deliverers, Types of this great Saviour. All their Priests, Uchers to bring in this High-Priest of our Profession. All the Mysteries in Scripture, forewarned them of this Mystery.

Nay the very Heathens were not destitute of these Forewarnings.

1. Balaam's Prophecy, St. Augustine conceives, was kept upon Record even among the Gentiles. *There shall come a Star out of Jacob.* That helped the Observation of the Wise-men from the East; where is he that is born King of the Jews? The appearance of that Prophetical Star, awakened their expectation. The Manichees reject that Story of the Star; as if Christ's Birth had been governed by a Constellation. No, faith St. Augustine, *Stella famulabatur Testimonio; non dominabatur imperio.*

rio. *Christus fuit Fatum; Stella non Stella Christi*: It was a ministring Star, it did not over-rule His birth, it served to foretel Him. Serm. I.

2. The shaking of Heaven, and Earth, and declining of the Sun, in *Solinus* his Time, was observed, and wondred at by the Gentiles. *Tertullian* reminds the Romans of it, tells them they had it in *Archivis*, kept a Record of it.

3. The Prophecies of the Sybils. *St. Augustine* puts a great Difference twixt them and the Jewish Prophecies. *Quantum distat de Christi adventu inter prædicationem Angelorum, & confessionem Dæmonum?* But yet they were no Forgeries of Christians: The Heathen owned them, could not gain-say them.

4. Miracles among the Jews, stirr'd up the World to this great Expectation. *Virgo concepit, sterilis parit, mutus loquitur, utero clausus exultat*; all matters of wonderment. *St. Ambrose* puts them together, as Attendants of his Incarnation. Many Prodigies among the Heathen, mentioned by their own Authors, and enforced by ours, (a Babe in the Womb, crying *Io Triumphe!*) put them all to Amazement, made them conceive some strange Discovery of God should be made amongst them, and to cry out in astonishment, with their Prophet *Balaam*, *What will God work?*

III. This shaking of the Nations, 'tis *Concussio magnæ matationis*: It foretells a shaking of all things into a great Alteration. Christ, at his Coming, and by his Gospel, shall cause a great alteration, and Change in the world. As a powerful Conqueror alters the former Face, and Fashion of Government, sets up, and establishes new Laws, and Customes: So Christ, at his entring upon His Government, shall cast all into a new Form. Hence it is that the time of the *Messias* is called a new Creation: *Old things are passed; Behold, all things are become new*. The Apostle calls the time of the Gospel, a *New World*, *Heb. ii. 5*. The Jews call it the *World of the Messias*. *Behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth; the former shall not be remembred*, saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, when he saw His Glory, and spake of Him.

Take it in three Particulars. The Coming of Christ wrought a great Change,

1. *In statu rerum.*

2. *In moribus hominum.*

3. *In modo rituum.*

I. *In statu rerum.* The whole World received a great Alteration, not in their Polity, and civil Government; *Herod* was afraid, where no Fear was. Christ comes not to overthrow, but to establish Governments. The Gospel dissolves not, but fastens, and strengthens the Bonds of Obedience. Seditious, and rebellious men make the Jews choice, disclaim *Christ*, and lay claim to *Barabbas*, a mover of Sedition, a maker of Insurrection: No; *Crucifigatur Barabbas, & vivat Jesus*; Let *Christ* live, and let *Barabbas* be crucified. Government, and Authority, 'tis not impaired, but improved by Religion. But yet our Saviour's Coming wrought great Alterations. For Paganism to give place to our Christian Religion; for Idols to bow down, and Christ's Cross to be exalted; the abolishing of those Superstitions, in which the world was drowned, and that against the Sea, and Torrent of so long Custom, against the Wit, and Learning of their wisest Philosophers, against the rage, and cruelty of persecuting Princes: 'twas a strange Alteration. *Miratus est orbis se factum Christianum*. The world wondered at so sudden a Change, could not believe it should hold and continue. The Pagans had a Dream, which they pleased themselves withal, that Christianity should continue but three hundred sixty five years, and then Idolatry should be restored. 'Tw'as a strange wonder to see all wild Beasts repair to the Ark, and gently to submit to *Noah's* Government of them. To see Pagans, and Idolaters, abandon their Idols, and flock to Christ's Church; *non hominum actu, sed Dei nutu*, saith *St. Augustine*, not driven by men, but guided and led, by a secret hand; 'twas a great Alteration.

Nay; not only the Common People, more easily wrought upon; but that Princes, and Emperours should be carried along in this great Mutation, that the Church's Persecutors should become Protectors; like *Abimelech*, saith *St. Augustine*, who first would have deflowered *Sarah*, afterwards honoured her, and protected her;

Serm. I. or, as *Nebuchadnezzar*, first compelling to Idolatry, then suddenly changed, and forbidding Blasphemy. For this Ark of God, at the first entrance, to strike *Dagon* down, and yet the Philistines to enrich it with Gifts, and Offerings, *Hæc est mutatio dextræ Excelsi*; a glorious alteration.

This Change by Christ's coming doth manifest it self;

2. *In moribus hominum.* It civilized, and sanctified the Dispositions of men. Mankind, before Christ, was, like the *Demoniac* in the Gospel, untractable, and outrageous; now we sit at Christ's feet, gentle, and peaceable. *Isaiah* foretels this Change to be wrought upon Christ's Incarnation, Chap. xi. *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lye down with the Kid, and the Calf and the young Lion; for this little Child shall lead them.*

Saint *Chrysostome* makes it the great Demonstration of Christian Religion, that it can soften, and sweeten the most barbarous Natures. In disputes for our Religion with Heathens, and Infidels, we call for no Miracles, saith he; *Quin homines profarius antea Bestiis truciore, Angelorum nunc imitatores effectos.* Christ's coming shall turn Swords into Plow-shares, Spears into Pruning Hooks, *Isai. ii. 4.* that is, saith *Tertullian*, *Feros, & sævos animos, in probos, & boni fructus operarios.* He will turn instruments of Cruelty into dispositions of Mercy. Out of the Devourer comes Honey, saith *Samson*, ἀπὸ οὗ ἐστὶν ὁ βρῶσις, ὁ γλυκύς, that is, saith *St. Basil*, ἀπὸ μωσθενικοῦ φιλανθρωπία. And *St. Augustine* alludes to the same Riddle often; *Ore Leonis fœvus ex structus*, that is, *persecutores Ecclesiæ, dulcedine Evangelicâ imbuentur.* The Persians, saith *Chrysostome*, that in their Gentilism professed Incest, now by Christ's coming do practise Chastity. The Britains, saith he, fed on man's Flesh, *nunc jejuniis reficiunt animas suas.* They that can tame Lions and Tigers, how are they wondred at? How glorious is our Saviour, that can alter, and change such barbarous dispositions?

This change, and alteration appeared,

3. *In modo Rituum*, in the shaking, and removal of *Moses* his Rites, and Law of Ceremonies. The Apostle makes good this interpretation, *Heb. xii. 27.* *It signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, and the bringing in of those things that should remain.* Christ's coming, 'tis called by the Apostle, *The time of Reformation*: it put the period to all Legal observances. When Christ came, saith *Chrysostome*, *Zachary* was struck dumb: the old Priesthood was silent. As *Theodoret* doth moralize our Saviour's purging the Temple; *He cast out the Oxen, and Sheep, and those that sold Doves*; Have these things hence, *Mine House shall be called an House of Prayer*: He removed those provisions of outward Sacrifices; the Incense of Prayer was the Sacrifice of the Gospel. *Ἀσκήσαι πνεύμα σου, ἢ ἀλγίζου ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου*, saith *Nazianzene*. These shadows flee away, when the Truth is exhibited.

There are two times in the day, when the shadows are longest, and exceed the Body; in the morning, and at evening, before the Sun sets. The time of the Law, that was the morning of the Church; then the shadows of Religion were larger than the substance: and it will be a Sign of the evening and Sun-set of Religion, when these shadows shall be stretch'd out again, and out-reach the Body. Our Times are the Noon-tide of the Gospel: the shadow is contracted; but the Body of Truth is in its full proportion.

This wearing away of Jewish Ceremonies is typified by *Moses* in the Law of Sacrifice, *Numb. xix.* At the Feast of Tabernacles (and that, say some, was a Type of Christ's Birth; ἡ σκηνώσις, He pitched his Tabernacle then amongst them,) at the Feast, on the first day they offered thirteen Bulls, the next day twelve; so daily decreasing, till they came to one: shewing thereby, that the Legal Sacrifices were to diminish, and wear away, and to end in that one precious Sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Those Rites (saith *St. Bernard*) were but Buds, and Blossoms: *Prodeunte fructu, flos decidit*; *apparente veritate, figura pertransit.* The Flower fades, saith *St. Peter*; *sed Verbum Domini* (this Word Incarnate) *abides for ever.* Those Rites and Ceremonies were but a Pedagogie for Children: Christians are grown Men. Were it not ridiculous (saith *Chrysostome*) to see a grown man go to School with Children, to have an Horn-book at his Girdle, and to learn his Letters?

They

They had their use in their time, and were comely, and beautiful; but now, *Serm. I.*
præsentia Christi is gloria Templi. The Knowledge, and Worship of Christ, 'tis the
 beauty, and glory of the Temple. Solomon's Cloud must vanish before this Sun
 of righteousness. What the Prophet threatned to the Altar at *Beth-el*, is justly
 applicable to the Altar at *Jerusalem*; O Altar, Altar, a Child shall be born, Jesus by
 name, that shall put an end to thy Sacrifices, and bring in more significant, and sanctify-
 ing, and saving Ordinances.

And that's the third kind of shakings; *Concussio mutationis.*

IV. There is yet a Fourth, and that's *Concussio vehementis adductionis*; a strong,
 powerful drawing of men to a Christian conversion. The working of men to the
 embracing of Christ, it is not done *nutu voluntatis, sed nixu potentiae*, as St. *Augu-*
stine speaks in the like case. Shaking, and trembling, fear and astonishment are
 the usual preparations to bring us to Christ. As the Goaler; a great Earth-quake
 went before, the Foundations of the Prison were shaken, horror, and amazement
 seized upon him before his Conversion. Comfort, and assurance is not the first
 immediate work of Grace, but other Preparations must fit us for it. As *Chrysostome*
 compares it; They that die Purple, and Scarlet, put their Cloth in other Colours
 first, then afterwards, they put it into the richest Tincture, and 'twill last the bet-
 ter: So the Soul of a Sinner must have other affections of fear, and sorrow, and
 anguish, and perplexity: and then Christ, and his Gospel, are more sweet and
 seasonable. *Moses* must hew the Tables, on which God will write; Repentance
 must first hew our hearts, before Christ, and his Spirit, write his Gospel upon them.
 The Law, saith *Fulgentius*, must first make us *inexcusabiles*; then Christ and his
 Gospel will make us *inaccusabiles*. First, Fear must cry out, O! there is no salva-
 tion; *Quis excusabit? who shall excuse us?* Then Faith will assure us, *There is no*
condemnation; *Quis accusabit? Who shall condemn us?* First God darts into us flashes
 of Lightning, horrors, and perplexity: then he sheds into us Beams of comfort,
 and Gleams of glory.

That's the first particular, the solemn preparation before Christ's coming: *I*
will shake all Nations. We proceed to the

Second, The gracious performance of this blessed Promise: *The desire of all Na-*
tions shall come.

A sweet expression, a winning Description of our Saviour Christ: He is the *de-*
fire of all Nations, Deliciae humani generis; the Hope, and Love, the Desire, and
 Joy of the Sons of men; the blessing of Mankind, and comfort of the World. All
 his other Titles are as Ingredients to make up this Perfume; all like Letters to spell
 up this Name, *The desire of all Nations.*

Indeed, Christ is the desire of all things in Heaven, and Earth: and his Incar-
 nation, that great work, that all things looked for.

I. He was *Desiderium Patris*, the Desire, and Joy, and delight of his Father. Not
 only in his Deity, but as he was Incarnate, God did infinitely delight in him. He
 was his *Lemuel*, his Son, the Son of his Bosom, the Son of his Desires. *Gloria Pa-*
tris, Filius sapiens, saith *Solomon*. The Son incarnate was the *Wisdom of his Fa-*
ther, and he gloried in him. 'Twas *Plato's* conceit, that God was *Elatus gaudio,*
mundo condito: Surely he was highly pleased, deeply delighted with this Master-
 peice of his Wisdom, Power, Mercy, Christ's Incarnation.

Saint *Ambrose* compares God's Love to Christ, as he was Incarnate, to the love
 that *Jacob* bore to his Son *Joseph*. He was *Filius senectutis, παλαιότητος*: So (saith He)
 Christ was *mundo senescente natus*; intended from Eternity, but born in this last
 Age of the World: —*mea sera, & sola voluptas*. When *Isaac* smelt the smell of his
 Son's Raiment; O, said he, *The smell of my Son is as the smell of a Field, which the*
LORD bath blessed. Not only the Divinity of Christ, but the garment of our Flesh
 upon him, the fragrancy of that makes him amiable to his Father.

'Twas the will, and desire of his Father to have him Incarnate. *He came not of*
himself, but his Father sent him. Come, I will send thee to thy Brethren, said *Jacob* to his
 Son *Joseph*; *Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with them*. This Incarnation for
 our Redemption was not the love of Christ only, without, or against his Fa-
 ther's

Serm. I.

ther's liking; Not like *Jonathan's* kindness to *David*, fore against his Fathers will. He undertook not our Cause, nor vanquished our enemies, as *Jonathan* made his on-set on the *Philistines*, his Father not knowing it; nor did God part with him unwillingly, and upon much importunity, as *Jacob* did with *Benjamin* to ransom his Brother: No; his coming was the Desire of his Father, God sent him, gave him Commission to achieve our Salvation, he had a special Command; *This Command have I received of my Father.*

It makes much to the fulness of our Salvation, that Christ steps not in as a private mediating Friend; but is imployed by God, comes with full authority to negotiate, and transact the work of our Redemption. He is the Apostle of our profession, *Heb. iii. 1.* The promise of Christ's coming was not faintly made, or slightly purposed: No; God zealously affected it, *The zeal of the LORD of Hosts shall perform it, Mai. ix. 7.*

That's the first, He is *Desiderium Patris.*

II. Christ was *Desiderium Angelorum*; the desire of the Angels. They longed for this glorious work of our Saviour's Incarnation. They wondred at it, and were ravished with joy at the glory of it. Those Stars of the morning sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy at his manifestation. How did Heaven empty it self to behold the Spectacle? The Angels ascended and descended upon the Son of man. Those glorious Spirits had rather be in the stable with Christ, than in Heaven without him. This Day of Christ's Nativity was a Festival for the Angels. They do *συναγέλλαντες, & συναυτοῦντες οἱ αἰετες*, saith *Nazianzen*. It makes Holy-day in Heaven. Envy at this great Honour done to our Nature (as some Divines conceive) was the first, and great sin of the revolting Angels. The Devils repined at it: But the blessed Angels desired it, and earnestly longed for it. They desired that the ruins of Heaven might be this way repaired: *Soliciti, ut veniant lapides vivi, ad insaurandam ruinam cæli*, saith *Bernard*. They hungred, and thirsted after this Mystery. Those glorious Spirits, when Christ came in the Flesh, cast not down Boughs from the Trees, but Crowns from their Heads, and adored his Incarnation. They were never satisfied with searching into this Mystery. *Into these things the Angels desire to look*, *1 Pet. i. 12.* They are still listning, and learning by the Church the great Wisdom of God, treasured up in Christ. The Curtains of the Tabernacle were embroidered all with Cherubims: That typified, there is a throng of Angels in our Churches. Angels assemble themselves in our Congregations to partake these Mysteries. We count Christ's Incarnation but a common ordinary Truth, milk for Babes only: Nay; saith the Father, 'Tis ἀπὸ θύγατρον, ἐν τρέφουσιν, & ποτιζουσιν. 'Tis the hidden Manna, and Food of Angels.

That's a second; He was *desiderium Angelorum.*

III. Christ was *desiderium totius Creaturæ*. He was the desire, and longing of all the Creation. The whole frame, and fabrick of the World desired him. The whole Creation by a secret, but yet forcible instinct waited, and longed for his Incarnation. His Coming was their greatest perfection, and full accomplishment. The highest advancement the Creature is capable of, was the Hypostatical Union. The whole world received a glorious perfection, in that Man's Nature, the choice of the Creatures, obtained that Priviledge. The Incarnation wrought this great work, filled up that infinite distance betwixt God, and the Creature. *Supremum infimi did attingere infimum Supremi*: The Creature made as near to God, as possibly it could be. That contradiction in *St. Augustine* is here reconciled; *Impossibile est Deo aut æqualem sibi facere Creaturam, aut inæqualem filium*. This sacred Mystery hath accorded that impossibility. Christ is now become the Head to the whole Creation. Indeed *Caput naturale influentiæ* he is only to his Church, for life, and government; but *Caput eminentis regiminis*: he is to all Creatures, for authority, and regiment. And, as he is the Creatures highest perfection; so, upon their decay, they longed for him for their reparation; that by whom the World was first made, by him it might be restored.

'Twas by sin, made subject to vanity, liable to corruption, blasted with God's curse; Christ was to take off that curse, and restore the world to it's first integrity.

city. *The earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved, I bear up the Pillars of it, Sermon. I.*
 Plal. lxxv. 3. Christ upholds all things by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. The earnest expectation of the Creature waited for the manifestation of the Son of God, Rom. viii. 19. See what words of desire, and longing, the Apostle uses;

1. It hopes for him.

2. It earnestly expects him. Ἀποκατάστασις, erecto capite: as Siser's Mother, looking out at the Windows; *Why is his Chariot so long a coming? why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?*

3. Συσταλέσθαι, It sighs, and groans for him, as impatient of his stay.

4. Συνδιδόναι, It travels in pain, longing till Christ shall repair, and restore it. *Reparabitur hereditas, cum venerit heres.* Now the King is come, *He will restore all things.* What the Husbandmen said wickedly, we may say comfortably, *Hic est Heres*; See, the Heir is coming to us, let us receive him thankfully, and the inheritance shall be ours.

IV. Christ was *desiderium Patriarcharum*. The People of God in the old Testament, they looked for him. Many Prophets, and Kings longed for this day, but could not attain to it, Luke x. 24. Abraham, he desired to see this day of Christ, John viii. 56. Old Jacob on his death-bed, he groaned for it, *I have waited for thy salvation*, Gen. xlix. 18.

'Twas the honourable Title of the Saints before Christ, they are called Waiters and Expecters. Simeon was one that waited for the consolation of Israel, Luke, ii. 25. Joseph of Arimathea, he waited for the Kingdom of God, Mark xv. 43. Many a long look did they fetch for his Coming.

This blessed Birth was like those Types that prefigured him; Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, long sued for, and desired, before they were obtained. LORD, *what wilt thou give us, if thou givest not thy Son?* was the voice of their Faith. How did they search, and enquire diligently, when, and at what time, Christ should be born? It busied all their thoughts. I; that's the guise of Waiters, and Expecters. As St. Bernard upon those words of the Gospel, *Esote similes hominibus expectantibus*. If we see men ploughing in the Field, or trading in the Market, we say not to them, *Whom do ye look for? Neque enim similes sunt expectantibus*: but, if we see one calling, and knocking at the door, and look up to the Windows, *Nihil mirum, si dicitur, Quem expectas?* It kept their Faith waking, and listning, and observing the times, and seasons, and signs of his coming. They were not like the drowsie Virgins, but their Lamps were burning. Nay; 'twas not only the waiting of the Virgins, which were her companions; but the waiting of the Spouse for the coming of the Bridegroom. *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his lips*, Cant. i. 2. 'Twas *vox Patriarcharum desiderantium Christi adventum*, saith the Father. *Felix osculum, in quo non os ori imprimitur; sed Deus homini unitur*. They longed for the Nuptials of his Incarnation. *The delay of this coming was the reason*, saith Gregory, *why the Saints complained, their days were shortened; because they could not live to see Christ in the flesh*. They only saluted the Promise afar off, and dyed in the Faith of it.

But yet the *Emphasis* of the Text lies chiefly upon this, that Christ comes as *The desire of the Nations*. And 'tis our great comfort, that mankind was the aim, and end of his coming. The Angels desired him, and the Creatures longed for him, and they both got good by him; but he came to us upon primary intention. *Venit ad homines*; nay, *propter homines*. He wrought our deliverance, not upon the by, as David saved Nabal's Flocks, while he was in the Wilderness upon his own occasions; or, like the Samaritan, that went upon other business, and chanced to meet us, and find us in our misery, and slept out of his way to help us: but came purposely to us; *Ad hoc natus est*. Now, surely, he will not frustrate the main end of his Nativity.

And as 'twas for Mankind, so 'twas for all. He was born an Universal good for all People, and Languages. The original promise was made to mankind in general. Indeed, upon the enrolment, it had a special entail to Abraham's Posterity. *All Nations shall worship the Lord at the Feast of Tabernacles*, Zech. xiv. 16. That Feast (ye heard before) was a Type of Christ's Nativity; all People have their share in this great Festival.

But

Serm. I.

But then the Enquiry will be, How the Nations can be thought to desire our Saviour before his coming? Alas! by Nature we had neither sense of Misery, nor hope of Mercy. Christ was not in all our thoughts. *Nemo orat, nisi qui credit, & sperat*, saith St. *Augustine*. How can they desire him, in whom they never believed? How can they believe in him, of whom they never heard? *Ejus desiderio flagrant, cujus suavitatem fide degustant*, saith Gregory. We had no relish of him. *Ut desideratus sit expectantibus, prius oportuit jam dilectum esse credentibus*, saith St. *Augustine*. The Nations neither knew him, nor loved him; how could they desire him? What the *Shunamite* said to *Elisba*, Mankind may say to God, *Did I desire a Son of my Lord*; Did we once think of this means of Salvation? Nay; verily, the coming of Christ is *desiderium ex-promisso, non promissum ex-desiderio*. God's promise must beget our desires; our desires do not occasion Gods promises to us. *Esurire Christum non possumus, nisi ipse nos excitat, ut quæatur*; saith *Fulgentius*. How is it then conceivable, that Christ should be the Desire, and Expectation of all Nations?

Take it in these Expressions?

First, He was *desiderium Nationum*, that is, *desideratus pro Nationibus*. The Faith of God's People desired his coming, not for themselves, but for others also. *God persuade Japhet to dwell in the Tents of Sem*, was the Prayer of the Patriarchs. *Let the People praise thee, O God, Let all the People praise thee; Let the ends of the World see the salvation of our God*. The Jews received these Promises not for themselves only; but unto us they did minister the Blessings of the Gospel. They were Feoffees in Trust, to whom the Promises, and Covenant was committed for the good of others also. He was to be a Joy to all People. The Jews were not to engross this Oyl of gladness to themselves; but to borrow Vessels of their Neighbours, and to pour it into them. Thus *Solomon* describes the care of God's People for the Gentiles conversion, *Cant. viii. 8. We have a little Sister, and she hath no Breasts; what shall we do for our Sister, when she shall be spoken for?* The Patriarchs were desirous to raise up seed to their dead Brethren, the Gentiles: they would not be *discalceati* in *Israel*; but men *shod with the preparations of the Gospel*; desiring to gain the Gentiles to the Gospel of Peace.

Secondly, Christ was *desiderium Nationum*. God had among the Gentiles a certain hidden portion. *Etiam apud Gentiles quidam prædestinati latitabant*, saith St. *Augustine*. Some Saints among them, to whom the Promise was revealed. *Job* was a Gentile, not of *Jacob's* Posterity; he was the first from *Esau*, as *Chrysostome* accounts him: yet, how did he wait for a Saviour? how, like a Jew, nay, like a Christian, a Prophet, nay, an Evangelist, doth he confess Christ? *I know that my Redeemer lives*, *Job xix. 25. Melchisedech* is, probably, conceived a *Canaanitish* King; all *Abraham's* Kindred were beyond the Flood; this Country was the lot of *Cham's* Posterity: and yet *Melchisedech* an High-Priest to God, the most lively Type of the promised Messiah.

Even in those dark times, *Illuxerunt quædam coruscationes orbi terrarum*, saith *Prosper*: some Flashes of Light brake in upon them, to awaken their Faith to this expectation. *Paucis ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium*, saith He: Few there were, but yet some, that believed these Promises, and desired their fulfilling.

But yet this makes not up the fulness of this glorious Style. What, though some few did desire, and expect him? This Scripture offers more grace, and comfort. He must be the Desire of all People, and Nations, in a more enlarged sense, and of greater extension.

Conceive it thus. Desire implies three motions, or affections, and they put upon the thing desired three qualifications.

I. It is seen in *appetitione*, in longing, and wishing. That implies *indigentiam*, great need and necessity.

II. It is seen in *adeptione*, in attaining, and possessing. That implies *Satisfactionem*; it gives Contentment, and full Satisfaction.

III. It is seen in *fruitione*, in enjoyment, and fruition. That implies *Complacentiam*, the comfortable Complacency, and full Delectation. All of them eminently in our desire of Christ.

I. Desire implies *indigentiam*. Necessity breeds desire: Want begets wishing. The Nations,

Nations, all mankind stood in need of Christ. Necessity, 'tis a real desire: Misery *Serm. I.* naturally calls for Mercy. As we say, the dry-parched earth desires Rain, because it needs it. Our Misery calls for a Saviour, though our Prayers did not. As *Job* speaks of the poor, *Their Loins blessed him, being warmed by his Fleeces*; though their Hearts, may be, or their Tongues did not: so our Misery, and Thralldom, the woful extremity into which we were cast, that called loud in the ears of God, *Why hast thou made all men for nought?* that pleaded for a Saviour.

This necessity of Christ, 'tis compared to the most earnest, and eager longings. 'Tis called an *hungering*; that's earnest, and violent, when it comes to extremity. The anguish of Hunger exceeds any other Distemper. *Morbi ex inedia aciores, quam qui ex repletionem*; 'tis the Physicians Aphorism. No Sickness so extream, as the famishing of Hunger. 'Tis called a *thirsting*; and the violence of that exceeds the other of Hunger. *Κρεῖττον ἀνέχονται διψῶντες, ἢ πεινῶντες*, saith *Aristotle*. Our souls were not as a Garden watered; but burnt up as a dry, parched Wilderness.

In other Necessities, one Nation may fetch supply from another; mutual intercourse may furnish their Wants: but, for this supply, make *Ahab's* search in all Countreys, and Kingdoms; they will confess their want, and necessity. All Nations shut up under Sin. The greatest conquerours were themselves but captives. *Gens victrix Nationum, captiva vitiorum*, saith *St. Augustine*. All stood in need of a Saviour and Redeemer.

II. Desire in the attaining implies *Satisfactionem*. That is the matter of our desires, the obtaining of which, gives full satisfaction. And the fulness of Christ abundantly satisfies the desires of all men. *Anima desiderat Christum*, saith the Father, *non aliud tanquam illum, non aliud præter illum, non aliud post illum*: nothing in stead of him, nothing besides him, and it desires nothing after him. *Simeon* desires to die, when he had seen his Saviour. *Oculis videntibus Jesum, nihil dignum visu præter Jesum*.

Other Desires are empty, and unsatisfying: nay, they engender after-vexation. The Father compares it to the itching of a Sore; *Scalpando exulceratur, succedit pruritus cruciatus*. The Prophet compares it to a Dream of meat, when he awakes, his soul is empty. But Christ is fully sufficient to satisfy the Soul. Let *Azab's* death be upon all the World, this living Bread, that comes down from Heaven, shall give life to the World. *Whence shall we have Bread enough to satisfy so many?* Yes saith God; *I will make a Feast to all People*, saith the LORD, *a Feast of fat things, and they shall be satisfied*. Thus, saith *Origen*, Christ answers all desires. To every part, and power of the Soul, Christ becomes a kindly, proper, full satisfaction. He is called the *True Light*, that the Eye of the Soul may have wherewith to be enlightened. He is the Word, that the Ear of the Soul may have what to hear: the Bread of Life, that the Taste of the Soul may have what to feed upon. Indeed Christ hath in him all that we need, or can possibly wish for. He is the Poor man's riches, the Despised man's honour, the Hungry man's food, the Sick man's health, and the Dying man's life. Other things may afford us some small refreshings. His coming brings life it self, and brings it in abundance, *Job x. 10. Ab istis salubritas quædam, ab hoc salus ipsa petenda est*. That's the Second.

III. Desire in the fruition breeds Joy, and Complacency. *The desire fulfilled*, saith *Solomon*, *is a tree of life*. Here we have the true Tree of Life, the very leaves whereof shall heal the Nations. *Mulier, quam dedisti nobis*, saith *Bernard*, LORD, *the Woman that thou hast given* (speaking of the blessed Virgin) *hath given us of the Tree of Life, and we shall live for ever by it*. O, the fruit of this Tree, 'tis good for food, 'tis pleasant to the eye, a Tree to be desired, to make us happy. *Esay* wonders at those that can see no beauty in this pleasant Plant, that they should not delight in him, that count him as a withered root, out of a dry ground, without form, or comeliness. As *Aristotle* told him, that wondred what Beauty was, that men were so taken with it; it was τὸ ἀφανὲς ἰσχυρῶς a Blind man's Question. See how the Spouse, when she hath found her Beloved, surveys all his Beauty: *He is the comeliest of ten thousand; speciosus præ filiis hominum*. All the attractives of love, and delight are eminently in him. He is exceeding lovely, infinite loving. His loveliness provokes love, his lovingness challenges it. The enjoying of both, how can it but raise the World to an extasie of joy, and holy ravishment?

Serm. I. We have seen the second thing of the Text, the Promise assured us; *The desire of all Nations shall come.*

And this, 'tis not a single Promise; 'tis a Promise pregnant. It includes, and implies other Promises with it. Great, and precious Promises are conveyed to us by it.

First, Here is *Promissio de vocatione Gentium*. Here is a Door of hope set open for the Gentiles; it concerns us nearly, it is the Tenure we hold by. We were sinners of the Gentiles. It should much affect us, to see our Names enrolled in this great Conveyance, when we never thought of it. For a mere stranger to read over a rich man's Will, whom he never knew, and there to find himself Joynt-heir with the Children, and the whole Estate entailed upon him, it would deeply affect him.

Look to the rock, from whence you were hewn; nay, to the dung-hill, from whence you were raised; (so David describes the calling of the Gentiles, *Psal. cxiii. 7.*) The promise belongs to you, and to your Children, and to those that were afar off: that was our Condition, afar off by Nature; farther off by sin; yet farther by divine desertion, left to our selves; farther yet by exclusion, shut out from the People of God; nay, yet farther, by enmity, and wilful opposition; removed from God by all these distances, and yet the Promise belongs to us.

I. The latter Jews liked not this clause in the Covenant; that they had almost made a rasure in this great Conveyance. The calling of the Gentiles did much distate them: fain would they have cut off this entail. To the unbelieving Jews, it was *magnum scandalum*; they abhorred to hear of it. Aaron and Miriam snuffed at Moses, *ob Aethiopissam*, for marrying an Ethiopian: They disdain at Christ, for marrying to himself the Church of the Gentiles. When Christ did but darkly allude to Naaman the Syrian, and the Widow of Sarepta, (Types of the Gentiles) it had like to have cost him his life, *Luke iv.*

II. To the believing Jews 'twas *magnum dubium*. Peter made a stand at it; when Cornelius sent to him, God was fain to encourage him, and give him his Warrant for it. Jonah fled from Joppa, when God sent him to the Gentiles: and Peter would have stayed at Joppa, forborn to Preach to them, had not a Vision commanded him.

III. Even to Paul himself, the Doctor of the Gentiles, it was *Magnum Mysterium*, *Ephes. iii. 9.* Indeed there were Prophecies of it; but how they should be fulfilled, how the Gentiles should be incorporated into the Church, was a great Secret to them. As St. Augustine, and others denied the Antipodes, because they could not conceive, what passage was to them from the habitable World; so even the chief Apostles wondred how the Gentiles, the Churches Antipodes, could ever pass that same *μεγαλον ὄμιλον*, and joyn with God's People.

IV. It was *Magnum Miraculum*. When it was effected, it bred great Admiration. *Who hath heard such a thing? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a Nation be born at once? Isai. lxvi. 8.*

No; this work was reserved to our Saviours coming. *Soli Christo reposta erat vocandarum Gentium praeogativa*, saith Gregory. He came not, as Moses to the Hebrews: but as Jonah to Nineveh, Elijah to Sarepta. He left Father, and Mother (*Patrem caelestem*, and *Matrem Synagogam*) to marry us Gentiles. Like Benjamin, though we came last, and were youngest, and sat lowest, yet our Portion, 'tis five times greater than our elder Brethren's; the fulness of the Gentiles, to the gleanings of the Jews.

That's the first Promise.

Secondly, Here is *Promissio de unitate Ecclesiae*. All Nations pitched upon one desire, all expect the same common salvation. Before, so many Nations, so many supposed Deities; now, the LORD shall be One, and his Name shall be One, saith the Prophet Zechary. It was the end of his coming, to gather into one, all that were scattered, *Joh. xi. 52.* By his Incarnation, there is, saith St. Paul, an *ἀνασυναγωγή* of all, all reduced, and brought under one Head. Now all things in Heaven, and Earth, are made but one Family, *Ephes. iii. 15.* Particular Congregations make now but one Church; *Divisi in ramis, uniti in radice.*

'Twas that St. Augustine objects to the Donatists, that this Unity of one Christ could

could not keep them in Union. They multiplied Churches. *De ista frusto quàm multa frustra per Africam factæ sunt?* The unity with Christ in the Catholick Faith would not serve their turn; they must hold of another Head. If one come amongst them, and assured them of his Religion, *Christianus sum*; that he was Baptized, *Fidelis sum*; that he lived in the Churches Peace, *Catholicus sum*; *Christianus, Fidelis, Catholicus* would not serve the turn; *Donatus* his Ear-mark must be set upon him, or they did reject him.

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Nay, let the voice of joy and gladness be heard in all our dwellings: And let our joyfulness abound in the fruits of thankfulness for this inestimable benefit; that, rejoycing here in his holy comfort, we may, in his good time, lift up our heads with joy, at his second appearance: and that for Jesus Christ his sake, &c.

Serm. I.

We have seen the second thing of the Text, the Promise assured us; *The desire of all Nations shall come.*

And this, 'tis not a single Promise; 'tis a Promise pregnant. It includes, and implies other Promises with it. Great, and precious Promises are conveyed to us by it.

First, Here is *Promissio de vocatione Gentium*. Here is a Door of hope set open for the Gentiles; it concerns us nearly, it is the Tenure we hold by. We were sinners of the Gentiles. It should much affect us, to see our Names enrolled in this great Conveyance, when we never thought of it. For a mere stranger to read over a rich man's Will, whom he never knew, and there to find himself Joynt-heir with the Children, and the whole Estate entailed upon him, it would deeply affect him.

Look to the rock, from whence you were hewn; nay, to the dung-hill, from whence you were raised; (so David describes the calling of the Gentiles, *Psal. cxlii. 7.*) *The promise belongs to you, and to your Children, and to those that were afar off:* that was our Condition, afar off by Nature; farther off by sin; yet farther by divine desertion, left to our selves; farther yet by exclusion, shut out from the People of God; nay, yet farther, by enmity, and wilful opposition; removed from God by all these distances, and yet the Promise belongs to us.

I. The latter Jews liked not this clause in the Covenant; that they had almost made a rasure in this great Conveyance. The calling of the Gentiles did much disstate them: fain would they have cut off this entail. To the unbelieving Jews, it was *magnum scandalum*; they abhorred to hear of it. Aaron and Miriam snuffed at Moses, *ob Aethiopissam*, for marrying an Ethiopian: They disdain at Christ, for marrying to himself the Church of the Gentiles. When Christ did but darkly allude to Naaman the Syrian, and the Widow of Sarepta, (Types of the Gentiles) it had like to have cost him his life, *Luke iv.*

II. To the believing Jews 'twas *magnum dubium*. Peter made a stand at it; when Cornelius sent to him, God was fain to encourage him, and give him his Warrant for it. Jonah fled from Joppa, when God sent him to the Gentiles: and Peter would have stayed at Joppa, forborn to Preach to them, had not a Vision commanded him.

III. Even to Paul himself, the Doctor of the Gentiles, it was *Magnum Mysterium*, *Ephes. iii. 9.* Indeed there were Prophecies of it; but how they should be fulfilled, how the Gentiles should be incorporated into the Church, was a great Secret to them. As St. Augustine, and others denied the Antipodes, because they could not conceive, what passage was to them from the habitable World; so even the chief Apostles wondred how the Gentiles, the Churches Antipodes, could ever pass that same *μέγα χάσμα*, and joyn with God's People.

IV. It was *Magnum Miraculum*. When it was effected, it bred great Admiration. *Who hath heard such a thing? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a Nation be born at once?* *Isai. lxvi. 8.*

No; this work was reserved to our Saviours coming. *Soli Christo repocita erat vocandarum Gentium prerogativa*, saith Gregory. He came not, as Moses to the Hebrews: but as Jonah to Niniveh, Elijah to Sarepta. He left Father, and Mother (*Patrem caelestem*, and *Matrem Synagogam*) to marry us Gentiles. Like Benjamin, though we came last, and were youngest, and sat lowest, yet our Portion, 'tis five times greater than our elder Brethren's; the fulness of the Gentiles, to the gleanings of the Jews.

That's the first Promise.

Secondly, Here is *Promissio de unitate Ecclesiae*. All Nations pitched upon one desire, all expect the same common salvation. Before, so many Nations, so many supposed Deities; now, the LORD shall be One, and his Name shall be One, saith the Prophet Zechary. It was the end of his coming, to gather into one, all that were scattered, *Joh. xi. 52.* By his Incarnation, there is, saith St. Paul, an *ἀνασυναγωγή* of all, all reduced, and brought under one Head. Now all things in Heaven, and Earth, are made but one Family, *Ephes. iii. 15.* Particular Congregations make now but one Church; *Divisi in ramis, uniti in radice.*

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could not keep them in Union. They multiplied Churches. *De ista frusta quàm multa frustra per Africam factæ sunt?* The unity with Christ in the Catholick Faith would not serve their turn; they must hold of another Head. If one come amongst them, and assured them of his Religion, *Christianus sum*; that he was Baptized, *Fidelis sum*; that he lived in the Churches Peace, *Catholicus sum*; *Christianus, Fidelis, Catholicus* would not serve the turn; *Donatus* his Ear-mark must be set upon him, or they did reject him.

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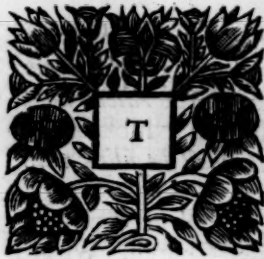
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ON
CHRISTMAS-DAY

The Second Sermon.

Saint John III. 19.

This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and men loved Darknes rather than Light.



HIS great Festival, which we now Celebrate, 'tis the religious, thankful Commemoration, which the Church of God makes of the great Benefit of our Saviour's Incarnation; the taking of our Nature upon him, for the accomplishment of our Redemption; the laying aside his Robes of Glory, and the putting on the Rags of our Humanity, and Frailty. As the King of *Israel* descended from his Chariot, put off his royal Apparel, and in the habit of a common Souldier entred into the Battel: So, now, our Saviour divested himself of his heavenly Glory, came down from his Throne of Majesty, clothed himself with the Flesh of frail man, entred into the Battel, to conquer our enemies, to ransom, and rescue our thralldom, and captivity. As *David* came down to visite his Brethren, descended into the valley with his staff, and sling, and Shepherd's scrip, to encounter *Goliath*: So, (saith *Bernard*) *Dominus exercituum fit Pastor Ovis*; undertakes to slay the Lion, the Bear, the uncircumcised *Philistine*, and to save his Flock, and People from their enemies. That's the Mystery of the day, the meaning of this service, as *Moses* speaks, *Exod. xii. 25*. The benefit we celebrate, 'tis the Word Incarnate, dwelling, and conversing amongst us, and vouchsafing his preface to the Sons of men.

But then 'twould be known, what's the duty of the day? That's an Enquiry of as great importance. It concerns us to see, and take notice of that welcome, and entertainment, which the world gives so glorious a Guest. *Nobilem hospitum habes, O anima, &c.* A great Personage is come amongst us. At the coming of a King into his Kingdom, men sit not still; but go forth to meet him, and receive him with all signs, and testimonies of Joy, and Triumph: They set open their Gates, yield up their Keys, protest their Allegiance, honour his Person with all Pomp and Solemnity. When *David* returned from the pursuit of *Abshalom*, all *Israel*, from *Dan* to *Beersheba*, flock'd out, to meet him. When *Saul* returned from the Wars, the Daughters of *Israel* met him with Timbrels, and Dances, and Songs of his Victory. How then is *this King of Glory* entertained at his coming into the World? Setting aside some contemptible men, a few Shepherds, old *Simeon*, and *Anna*, no considerable number; for the generality there was no man regarded him, or took notice of him. *He came into the World, and the World was made by him* (it had good cause to acknowledge him) *and the World knew him not*, Joh. i. 10. *He came to his own*, (whom he had endeared to himself by special favours) *but his own received him not*. Nay, they shut their Gates against him, laboured to exclude him, disclaimed their Allegiance to him; *We will not have this man rule over us*, Luk. xix. 14. Not Him; but *Cæsar*: any rather than He. At the first tidings of his approach, *Hierusalem*, the Chamber of the King, the head City of the Kingdom was troubled at it, Mat. ii. 3. *We hid, as it were, our faces from him, and we esteemed him not*,

Isai.

Isai. liii. 3. They all renounced their Interest in him: *We have no part in David, Serm. II. nor inheritance in this Son of Jesse, 2 Sam. xx. 1.*

'Tis strange; had he come as a Conquerour, only to reign, and rule over them, 'twere rebellion to refuse him: Nay; but he is come as a Saviour, and Deliverer to them, and yet they reject him. 'Twas but a Type of this entertainment, the repulse that *Moses* suffered in *Egypt*. It came into his heart to visit his Brethren, the Children of *Israel*: he supposed they would have understood, that God by his hand would work their deliverance; but they understood it not: nay, they thrust him away, saying, *Who hath made thee a Judge, and a Ruler over us?* Act. vii. 23, 25, 27. 'Tis that sin which our Saviour charges upon the World, *God hath sent his Son into the World: but that the World through him might be saved*, Ver. 17. 1; but the World despises so great salvation. 'Tis *Summa delicti*, and *reatus seculi*, the grand impiety, that the World must answer for: *This is their condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men love Darkness rather than Light.*

The Text then you see, is an Exprobration of the great sin of Infidelity, in not believing in Christ, and embracing of that Salvation, which he brings unto us. And this Exprobration is sharpened, and an edge put upon it by a threefold enforcement.

First, from the Nature, and Dignity of the Benefit, that by Christ's Incarnation is offered unto us. What was in the Womb of this last Night? what hath this day brought forth unto us? *Enixa est lucem; A great Light is come into the World.*

Secondly, From the Unworthiness, and great Indignity, that the world, through Infidelity, offers to this Benefit; they reject and abhor this Light, and shut it from them. *Let the day when this Man-child was born be darkness; let not light shine upon it. Men love Darkness rather than Light.*

Thirdly, From the heavy Doom, that this contempt of Christ, and neglect of His Grace, shall bring upon the world; 'tis *Titulus damnationis*, the just provocation of the World's Perdition: 'tis their Condemnation.

Thus you see the Text hath a double Aspect:

The first, gracious and comfortable: This Light rises presently, but then, upon Contempt it sets in a dismal Cloud, and a tempest of heavy Indignation. First the morning Sun-shine rose upon *Sodom*; then comes the storm of Fire and Brimstone, *Gen. xix. 23*. Indeed, it represents the double Advent of our Saviour; His second revenging the contempt of his first. The *Jews* dream of a second *Messias*, *filius Joseph*, he shall be a meek man, and a mean one; and *filius David*, mighty and victorious. There are both in the Text. Here is *filius Joseph in praesepi*, and *filius David pro Tribunali*. Here is the Mercy of his Incarnation, if we have Grace to make use of it: and here is the Vengeance for his Rejection at the day of Retribution. Here is the sound of the Harp, and the Song of the Angels at the day of his Birth; and then here is the sound of the Trumpet, the voice of the Arch-Angel at the day of Judgment. Here is the shining of a Star pointing out his first appearing; and then here is a dismal Comet in the Text fore-running his second; both *vagitus Infantis*, and *rugitus Leonis*; or, as *St. John* puts them both together, *ira agni*, the fiercest wrath from the meekest Lamb.

First, Let us see the Benefit it self, that's now vouchsafed us; Christ is come a *Light into the world*. And that's expressed in three particulars:

First, Here is the Nature, and condition of the Benefit: 'tis *Light*.

Secondly, Here is the Approach, and offering, and tendering of this Benefit: 'tis *Come*.

Thirdly, Here is the Place, and Persons to whom 'tis offered, and where 'tis exposed, that's *The World*.

First, Here is the Body of this Sun of Righteousness: He is all *Light*.

Secondly, Here is the rising, and ascending the Horizon; He is actually *Come*.

Thirdly, Here is the Orb, and Sphere where it moves, and which it enlightens: *The World*.

First, See the Nature, and Condition of the Benefit, 'tis *Light*. And that makes good to us this Observation, That *Christ is in himself, and is become to us, a most perfect Light*. This glorious and admirable Creature of Light, 'tis a fit Resemblance

Serm. II. to represent Christ. St. *Augustine* reports it from *Simplicianus*, the Bishop of *Milain*, that a *Platonick* Philosopher, reading those words of the Gospel, wherein Christ is set forth as *the light of men*, was deeply affected with that glorious description, and professed, it deserved to be written with letters of Gold, and to be set up in the most eminent Places of all Churches, and Temples. And 'tis a Representation the Scripture much delights in. Both the Saint *Johns*, the *Evangelist*, and the *Baptist*, make this the sum, and substance of their Ministration, to discover this Light. The *Evangelist* makes it the Tenour of his preaching; *This is the message we declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness*, 1 Joh. i. 5. And 'twas the *Baptist's* employment to point out, and discover, to bear witness of this Light, Joh. i. 7. Not that Christ needed St. *John's* Testimony. *Suo utitur testimonio Lux, non alieno suffragio*, saith *Ambrose*. We see the Sun by the Sun's light. *John* was but *lucerna latens*; who lights up a Candle to see the Sun? but as St. *Augustine* resolves it, *Propter infirmos, propter incredulos, propter non intelligentes, Sol lucernas quærebat. Fulgorem Solis lippitudo ferre non potest*. The World's weak Eyes could not otherwise behold it.

So then, let us briefly behold the glory of our Saviour in *hac umbra Lucis*, by this shadow and representation of created light. Not that this, or any other similitude can fully express him. What proportion is there betwixt the smallest Spark, and the whole Globe, and Element of Fire? To compare the glory of Christ with the Beauty and lustre of the most resplendent Creature; what is it, but to compare the glory of the Sun, with the glimmering of the Glow-worm? It's infinitely short of him. *Sed sic balbutiendum, cum de Deo loquimur*. We must spell out these unspeakable Mysteries by the help of these low inferiour Rudiments. Hereafter we shall have a full view of him: as yet, we must content our selves with these glimpses of glory. *Ad huc Josephus loquitur per interpretem, manifestat se nobis sicut vult, non sicut est*, saith *Bernard*. He stands yet behind the wall, looks forth at the Windows only, shews himself through this lattels; and at these chinks, and crevices, let us labour to behold him

And then conceive our Saviour to be a true Light.

I. *Naturâ & Essentiâ*.

II. *Usu & Officio*; by Office, and Employment.

I. In himself, and in his Divine Nature, He is perfect Light.

1. Exceeding clear, as Light: not the least shadow, or darkness of Errour in him.
2. Exceeding pure, as Light: no mixture of Evil, no tincture of Corruption in him.
3. Exceeding glorious, as Light: compassed with the Beams of Light, and Glory.

Light, 'tis *Tabernaculum Deitatis*, his place and habitation: He dwells in that light, that no man can approach unto; 1 Tim. vi. 16. Light, 'tis *paludamentum Deitatis*, his royal vesture is Light. He covers himself with Light, as with a Garment, Psal. civ. 2. Nay 'tis *substantia Deitatis*, 'tis his substantial perfection. *God is Light, and in him is no darkness*.

Indeed this Light is not the Light of this Day. The Light of his Divinity makes, and measures out the day of eternity. 'Tis the light of his Incarnation, the shining forth of that, that makes this day of his Nativity. Indeed, that other light it dazles, and swallows up our understanding. When we look for light, it turns to darkness; our most sublime Meditations enter into the cloud with *Moses*; *Accedimus ad caliginem, in qua Deus est*. The light of his Divinity, 'tis incomprehensible: the Beams he sheds forth, as God Incarnate, are more easily conceivable. As the body of the Sun, that Light it sends upward, our eye cannot reach it; the Beams it casts downward upon this lower Region, we can better behold them.

II. And they shew us Christ to be a light *Usu & Officio*, by Office, and Employment. He is not only a light in himself, but a light to others. In himself he is *Lux lucens*; but as he sheds forth his Beams to others, so he is *Lux illustrans*. As the Sun is not only lightsom in its own Body; but diffuses light to all things about it. All the Benefits of Light are in Christ. Reduce them to these three;

I. He

1. He is *Lux illuminans*; that's the first property of Light, to dispel, and drive away darkness, to enlighten other things, and to shine into them. And so 'tis one main end, and office of Christ, to bring into the World a supernatural Light of saving knowledge. *I am come a Light into the World, that whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness*, Joh. xii. 46. That's one reason, saith *Tertullian*, why Christ was born in the night-time. *Mysticè factum est, ut Christus in nocte nasceretur, lux veritatis futuræ ignorantiae tenebris*. It shews us our condition before this light did graciously shine on us; we were all overspread with the mists of ignorance. Mankind was naturally under a thick cloud of Darkness. Blackness of darkness overwhelmed the World, *Behold, darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the People*, saith *Isaiah*, Chap. lx. 2. Thus he describes our condition, when Christ came amongst us, *Isai. viii. 22. He shall look upon the earth, and behold darkness, and dimness: they dwell in the land of darkness, and shadow of death*. Nay, St. Paul expresses it with a stronger Emphasis, *Ephes. v. 8. Eratis tenebræ, You were sometimes darkness*; not only dim, but dark: nay, darkness it self.

Briefly, the World lay under a twofold darkness: and to remove them both, our Saviour brought with him a double light.

1. There was *tenebræ in medio*, external darkness. Without Christ, no Light set up in the World, to guide, or direct us; no natural means, that could shine upon us, to shew us our way. *They groped in the dark without light*, saith *Job*, chap. xii. 25. That which in part befel the Jews in their Captivity, was the universal Condition of the whole World by Nature: *We saw not our signs, there was not any Prophet, not one was there amongst us, that understood any more*. The voice of *Saul* (1 Sam. xxviii. 25.) is the voice of all mankind by nature; *God was departed from us, and never answered us by Dreams, or Visions, or any Revelation*.

2. There were *tenebræ in oculo*, internal Darkness; and that's the more uncomfortable of the two. Not only Darkness, but blindness: and so Christ must not only give us light, but sight. *The light of the body is the Eye*, Mat. vi. 22. We must have light in the Eye, as well as light in the Air. Without it, all outward light is to no purpose. The clearest Sun-shine is darkness to a blind man. *Certe labor irritus est, & nullus effectus, offerre lumen cæco*, saith *Cyprian*.

In supernatural Truths we want both our eyes: not only, like *Pelagius*, born with one eye, but stark blind. The most glorious Mysteries are to a natural man so many gross Absurdities. The promised Seed, the birth of this day, Faith in *Abraham* believed it: but Nature in *Sarah* laughed at it. *Quod Aquila constitetur, negat Noctua*: Faith is like the Eagle, it beholds the Sun; Infidelity, like an Owl, it cannot endure it. The most ridiculous Fables are more credible, and probable to such an one, than Divine Mysteries. *Citius Jupiter Taurus, aut Cygnus creditur, quam Deus homo*. Any fond Metamorphosis sooner believed than Christ's Incarnation. Indeed these Mysteries are too glorious for Nature's eye-sight. This Light is not to be looked upon, but by a light infused. The eye of Nature cannot fix upon it. *Our understanding*, saith *Solomon*, 'tis the Candle of God: but the light of the Sun will put out a Candle. Supernatural Truths overwhelm reason. *Quorundam bonorum, sicut & malorum, intolerabilis magnitudo est*, saith the Father, *ut ad ea percipienda tota divina gratia sufficiat*. Christ must come, not only to enlighten our darkness; but to illuminate our blindness. He must *in agnitionem veritatis oculare*, as *Tertullian* speaks, *He must open our understandings*, Luke xxiv. 45. *We know*, saith St. *John*, *that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him*. That's the first property of light; Christ is *Lux illuminans*, light and understanding, Dan. v. 14.

2. A second property and benefit of light: Christ is a light, *Lux purgans*. Light hath a purifying virtue, it brings pureness and beauty upon all that it shines upon. Darkness and uncleanness, they go together. *Obscenæ tenebræ*, loathsome darkness. *Lutum, sordes, tenebræ*, Tally heaps them together upon one dunghil. But light, that's amiable, and pure, and casts a lustre upon any thing. 'Tis the varnish of the World, the verdure and beauty of all the Creation. Before this light shined upon us in the face of Christ, the state of Darkness wherein we lay, was not only irksome

Serm. II.

irkfome, but loathfome: we lay wallowing in a dark Dungeon of all finful uncleanness: *David's* Dungeon, full of deep mire, *Pfal.* lxxix. 2. like *Jeremy's* Dungeon, a very gulf of pollution. Thus *Paul* calls the defilement of sin, *works of darkness*, *Rom.* xiii. 12. *the hidden things of darkness*, *1 Cor.* iv. 5. *Bernard* tells us, when we fell in *Adam*, we fell not only upon an heap of stones, to maim and bruise us, but into an heap of Mire and Dirt, to defile and pollute us: and so, saith he, *Christ* came not only to cure us, but to cleanse us; not only to ease us of the pain, but to purge away the pollution. His shining dispels all Mists and Fogs, that taint and annoy us. His grace doth not only cleanse us, but adorn us; not only purifie, but beautifie the Soul, it shines on. *Thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness, that I put upon thee*, *Ezek.* xv. 14. Light is the Soul's Beauty. Indeed, the beauty that light brings, far surpasses all other Beauty; no Vesture to the shining Garment. This transfiguration of our Souls, by *Christ* shining on us, makes us exceeding glorious; the reflection of his light upon us, *changes us from glory to glory*; *2 Cor.* iii. 18. Light is the Gospel's Beauty.

This makes the Gospel far more glorious than the Law; there is more light in it; *Moses* his face did shine, but his vail concealed it. Not only *Christ's* countenance did shine, but his Garments were glorious. In the Law, there was *splendor sub velamine*; in the Gospel, here is *velamen in splendore*; his very Garments are glorious. *Moses* his glory is done away by this glory of *Christ*. He doth *occlude*, *Elias* vanish, and disappear at this Sunshine. How beautiful doth the Church appear, clothed with light? In earthly, and sublunary Ornaments, the malignant Church may go beyond her. the Whore of *Babylon*, she is clothed with Purple, decked with Gold, and Pearls, and precious Stones; but one beam of light exceeds all these. The Church of *Christ*, she is clothed with the Sun, treads upon the Moon as her Cloth of State, Crowned with the Stars, all Ornaments of light: that's the Churches beauty. That's a *second* Property, *lux purgans*; He is light and Beauty.

III. *Christ* is a Light; *lux exhilarans*: that's a *third* property of light; it cheers, and refreshes other things, and puts vigour into them. The *Jews* had light, and gladness, *Hest.* viii. 16. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*, *Psal.* xcvi. 11. But darkness, 'tis horrid, and uncomfortable, it deadens and damps the Spirit of man, and makes it disconsolate. Now the light of *Christ's* coming dispels, and scatters this sad darkness. *Zechary* calls the shining forth of this light, a *gracious visitation*; *The Day-spring from on high hath visited us*. *Luk.* i. 78. And the proper subject of a merciful visitation is Misery, and Distress. *St. James* tells us, visiting belongs to the Widow, and the Fatherless in their affliction. Our Saviour tells us, it belongs to such as are sick, and in Prison. Sad, and disconsolate Souls, they are the Object of visitation.

It plainly reminds us of our woful condition without *Christ*. No friendless man so forsaken, and helpless; no forlorn *Lazarus* so ruful a spectacle; no enthralled bond-slave in such a Dungeon of Captivity; no mournful Caitiff so over-whelmed with sorrow, as our Nature was, before *Christ* did visit us. Ye may see what condition we were in, when God sent *Christ* to us, *Luk.* iv. 18. There *Christ* reads the Tenure of his Commission; *The Lord hath sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to deliver the Captives, to recover the blind, to bind up the bruised*. Poor, and blind, and bruised, broken hearted! here is the plight we lay in. *No eye pittied thee, thou wast cast out in the open field, weltring in thy blood, and then I looked on thee*, *Ezek.* xvi. 5, 6, 8.

In particular, the shining forth of the Light dispelled a threefold, sad, and sorrowful Darkness.

1. There is a Darkness of Misery and Affliction. *He hath set me in dark places, compassed me with affliction*, *Lam.* 3. 6. This Cloud of Darkness lay upon the World before *Christ's* coming, *Isai.* viii. 22. When *Christ* comes into the World, *He shall look upon the Earth; and behold trouble, and darkness, and dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness*. But his presence dispels this darkness; He brings tidings of Joy. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, will your God say. The joy of thy Birth shall be like the joy of Harvest, and like the joy of*

men

men that divide the spoil, *Isai. ix. 3.* The joy of an Harvest in the days of Peace ; the joy of a Victory in the time of Wars. What joy like these? After a terrible dead Winter, to have a plentiful Harvest ; after a cruel, bloody War, to have a full Victory : 'tis the great joy. Christ brings both with him ; *He is a Sun, and a Shield*, saith David. *Sol Autumni*, the ripening Sun ; and *Clypeus Belli*, the shield of our Victory. Serm. II.

Argolici Clypei, aut, Phœbeæ Lampadis instar.

Now we come with our Sheaves in our Bosoms ; and the spoils of our Victory upon our Shoulders. He is the God of comfort, our *Isaac*, the Son of laughter, the true *Noah* of the Church, that shall comfort us concerning all the trouble, and anguish of our Souls.

2. A second sad *Darkness*, is the darkness of God's overcast angry countenance, that was over-clouded against us ; and there was a dreadful Thunderbolt in that cloud to strike us to destruction. *Thou hidest thy face, and we are troubled*, saith David. The darkening of his Countenance, 'tis the fading and perishing of the Creature ; and, when it shines forth, they are renewed. *Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*, *Psal. lxxx. 19.* 'Twas the dotage of *Valentinus*, that *Pluvia* was *Dei fletus*, and *fulgor lucis* was *Dei risus*. When his imaginary God was merry, and laughed, that caused Sun-shine ; and when he was fullen, and shed tears, that brought Rain. *O risum illuminatorem ! O fletum rigatorem !* saith the Father wittily. 'Twas a part of his fond Heresie : but it carries the Moral of our sober Truth. The light of God's face, the smile of his Countenance doth enlighten and cheer us. And that Christ works for us ; he hath appeased the Anger of his Father, cleared up that cloud that hovered over our heads, and threatned our destruction. *In him he is well pleased* with us.

There is a *Darkness of Death*. 'Tis called *The land of Darkness*, *Job x. 12.* *A land of Darkness, as darkness it self.* The State of Death is called *Days of Darkness*, *Ecclef. xi. 8.* especially eternal death ; that's utter darkness, the *blackness of darkness*, the *power of darkness* ; 'tis the territory of the *Prince of darkness*, the range, and walk of Satan. And that makes it dismal. To be shut up in a dark Dungeon, 'tis grievous ; and that Dungeon to be haunted with Devils, that is exceeding hideous. Now Christ, by his coming, as a most comfortable light, hath driven away this darkness ; he hath destroyed death, subdued *him that had the power of death*, the *Prince of darkness*, *Heb. ii. 14.* The appearing of Christ, saith Paul, *hath abolished death, and brought life, and immortality to light by the Gospel*, *2 Tim. i. 10.* He hath entred into the Dungeon of death, into this hold of Satan, caused a light to shine into the Prison, *Act. xii. 7.* knocked off our Bolts, made these Chains of darkness to fall from us, led us through that Iron Gate, and set us at liberty.

Thus, every way, Christ is a most true, perfect light to us.

1. *Lux clarissima, Veritas.* A Light enlightening our Understandings. *I am come a light into the World, that whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness*, *Joh. xii. 46.*

2. He is *Lux purissima, Sanctitas.* A purifying, and beautifying Light, dissolving the works of darkness, making us *Children of light*, that we may shine as lights in an holy conversation.

3. He is *Lux jucundissima, Amœnitas.* A most cheering and comforting Light, filling our hearts with Joy and Gladness.

That's the first Particular of the Text, the Quality, and Condition of the Benefit ; 'tis *Light*. The

Second is, The coming of this Light ; the approach, and offering of this Benefit, the tendering of it to us ; *Is come*. And it carries with it a threefold Intimation.

I. It Points out the Original of this Light, 'tis a foreign Light, not bred, or breaking forth out of the lower Region ; 'tis not *relucetia Naturæ*, an irradiation of Nature, not kindled by humane Art, or any man's means, no lustre of any crea-

ture.

Serm. II. ture. Darkneſs cannot be the fountain and original of Light. 'Tis a light ariſing, ſhining, coming from without. 'Tis *ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*, and *ἀνωθεν*, it comes from above; from the Father of Lights, James i. 17. *Lux à primo lucido*. Zachary ſhews the original, 'Tis the day-ſpring from on high, (Luke i. 78.) that doth graciously viſit us. I am from above, John xviii. 23. Shall the mud-wall boaſt it ſelf, ſaith Bernard, that it ſends forth that light which ſhines upon it? The moſt clear pellucid body here below, 'tis but receptive of Light; 'tis not emiſſive. The Birth of this day, 'tis like the dew of the morning, Pſal. cx. 3. diſtilled from above; no miſt, or vapour exhaled from below. I am the Bread of life that came down from Heaven, John vi. 51. *Manna de cælo depluta*, the fatneſs of the clouds, not of the Earth. *Cæli progenies*. Righteouſneſs looking down (nay coming down) from Heaven, Pſal. xcv. That's the original; 'Tis come.

II. It ſhews the preventing freeneſs of this Light: 'Tis not ſaid, We firſt ſought it, or diſcovered it; but it brake in, and ſhined upon us; graciously, and freely. We never thought of it, or ſo much as wiſhed it; no *Prometheus*, that fetched it from Heaven for us. As when *Moses* came to the *Hebrews* in *Egypt*, they never looked for him, they wondred that God ſhould ſend any to viſit them. *Iſaiah* expreſſes it as a matter of wonderment, Chap. xlv. *The People that were in darkneſs, have ſeen a great light*; beyond all hope or expectation. Thus we are deſcribed, *A People that ſat in darkneſs*, never ſtirred hand, or foot, to make towards it, ſwallowed up in an eternal night, as we deem'd, without hope of recovery. In other caſes, we can wiſh for Light, and wait for it, and haſten to it: But here we ſetled our ſelves, as they in *Egypt*, when the plague of Darkneſs was upon them, *No man ſtirred from his place*; and Light came in, and ſhined freely on us. 'Tis come.

III. It points out the Time; 'Tis the actual, and preſent exhibition of it. This day was the *dawning of this Light*, the riſing, and ſhining forth of this *Sun of Righteouſneſs*. The Saints before had ſome tidings of this light, and ſome rays of it, *ſtricturas lucis*, as the Sun ſends ſome beams before it; but there was ſtill much darkneſs, and obſcurity. They had *crepusculum Legis*, ſome glimmerings of Light under the Law, and *Gallicinium Prophetarum* (Thoſe ſame *Lucis aves*, the Prophets, they gave warning of it) *St. Peter* tells us, all their light, was but the light of a Candle in a dark place; but we ſee the bright morning Star; nay, the Body of this Sun, the full Globe of light, in it's perfect luſtre. Here is the happineſs of Chriſtianity, here is the glory of the Goſpel. We live in Times of actual light. *The night is paſt, the day is come*, ſaith *St. Paul*. The Sun is mounted above our Horizon; nay, 'tis in the miſt of Heaven, a glorious full light of ſaving knowledge. *Joſeph* ſpeaks no longer to his Brethren by an Interpreter; but face to face. The Chriſtian Church, ſaith *Bernard*, is not put off with Prophets, and Predictions, with Types and Figures. *Mitte, per quem miſſurus es*, ſaith *Moses*: let himſelf viſite us. *Non audio Moſem, impeditæ linguæ eſt*; let not *Moses* ſpeak to us, he ſtammers. *Eſaiæ labia immunda ſunt*: *Jeremias puer eſt, neſcit loqui*; *viſiones, & ſomnia non recipio*; *figuras, & ænigmata nolo*; *ipſas quoque Angelorum faſtidio ſpecies, ipſe, quem loquuntur, ipſe loquatur*; let him ſpeak to us, whom they all ſpeak of.

There is one thing remaining in the exhibition of the Benefit; that's,

Thirdly, The Perſons to whom; the Place where this Light is expoſed: That's *The World*. Briefly, take the purport of it in a Double expreſſion;

I. Here is *proximitas*, the nearneſs, and propinquity; nay, the immediate preſence of it.

II. Here is *generalitas*, the large, and unlimited circumference, and compaſs of it: 'Tis both *centrum*, and *circumferentia*; the Centre of its preſence, and the Circumference of its motion.

I. It ſhews us the proximity of it; That's one privileged of the Goſpel. The Sun is not now in *Apogæo*; 'tis come not only towards us, but to us. 'Tis not in the height above, or in the depth below. No; the Goſpel offers us more grace; *the Word is nigh us*, Rom. x. 8. *Posuit Tabernaculum Soli*; God's Tabernacle

is amongst men, and he dwells amongst us. The means of salvation are brought home to us, even to our Doors. As, when the Sun shines in the World, it's but opening your window, and you let it in: 'Tis but opening your eyes, and ye presently enjoy it. *Now we may see with our eyes, and our hands may handle the Word of Life; Evigilet fides, & præsto sunt res: cernuntur, tenentur, & videre volentium oculis ingeruntur*, saith St. Augustine. There have been Times (and they may return again upon us) when salvation did not knock at every man's door. *Eli's Times*, when the Word of the LORD was precious, and rare, there was no open Vision, 1 Sam. iii. 1. *Amos his Times*, when men shall wander from sea to sea, from the North to the East, run to and fro, to seek the Word of God, and shall not find it: No; as yet Wisdom stands in our Streets, in the places of concourse, in the opening of the Gates, in the midst of the City, she utters her words, Prov. 1. 20, 21. And then,

II. Take notice of the extent and generality; 'tis Come into the World: a large comprehensive compass. And that's the second Priviledge of the Gospel. Before, indeed, God let in some Light; but it was into an angle, and corner of the World, a spot of ground, a small compass. One little Nation had the comfort of this light, the Jews only. The Church before Christ, was but Israel's Goshen, Gideon's threshing-floor, Solomon's Garden, shut up, and enclosed. Christ is not now *lucerna in domo*, as a Candle in a private house; sed *Sol in cælo*; as the Sun in the Firmament. Before, he was *lux modii*, a Candle under a Bushel; now he is *lux mundi*, nothing is hid from the light of it. Indeed, the Sun is made for the World, not for any streighter Region: all mens eyes may see, and behold it. *Lucem omnium oculi pariter possident* (saith St. Augustine) sic & Deum: dicat dives, Deus meus es tu: dicat Pauper, Deus meus es tu: plus dives habet, minus pauper, sed argentum, non Deum. Rich, and Poor, all kindreds of the Earth may have their share in him. 'Tis a small thing, saith God to Christ, that thou shouldest restore Israel: I will also give thee a light for the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. xlix. 6. The Gospel, saith our Saviour, 'tis like a Net cast into the Sea: not like an Angle cast into Jordan, to catch Jews only; but a great Drag-Net, spread upon the Waters, cast into the main Sea: Christ is the Desire of all Nations, Hag. ii. 7. a Joy to all People, Luk. ii. 10. Now all Flesh shall see the Salvation of God.

We have done with the first Branch of the Text, the Dignity of the Benefit, Light is come into the World. We proceed to the

Second, That is the unworthy abuse, the great indignity that the World, through Unbelief, offers to this Benefit. *Men love darkness rather than Light*. They refuse the offer of this Light, and shut it out, embrace darkness, and abhor light.

And it is not for nothing, that the Word is altered in the Text; He saith not, The World; but *Men love Darkness*, reject Light. It both specifies the Persons, for whom it was intended: no Creature in Heaven, or Earth, principally aimed at, but mankind only; *For us men, and for our Salvation, he came down from Heaven*. He shone upon other parts of the World, *radio obliquo*, they had but a glance of this light: He shines upon mankind *radio directo*, upon primary intention. And then, as it specifies the Persons, so it shames, and upbraids them; that Men, possessed with understanding, and reason, should so far degenerate, and become unreasonable, as to prefer darkness above light. *The Sun rises, and the Beasts run from it to their Dens*; but *Mangoes forth then*, saith David, and desires to enjoy it.

Naturally, Darkness is horrid to us, uncouth, and uncomfortable; it was one of the great Plagues of Egypt, that they were shut up in darkness. It is David's great curse, *Let their way be darkness*. On the contrary, Light is comfortable, and delightful to us. Eccles. xi. 7. *Truly, the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun*. And as it is with bodily light, so (were we as we should be) we would not endure to be shut up in Ignorance, or led into error. By Nature, man is *ζητητικόν, & ἐπιστημονικόν*, a searching inquisitive Creature, desirous of Knowledge. We abhor to be hood-winked, and to be kept in Ignorance.

Above all, Ignorance in matters of Religion is most shaming and reproachful. As *Parisiensis* observes well; to be Ignorant of some things, it is not a shame.

Serm. II. Ask a man, if he know how to Carve, or make a Picture, he will answer without shame, *Nescio*, he hath not the skill of it : but ask a man, if he knows how to live holily, how to worship and serve God ; that puts him to the blush, he is ashamed to say, *Nescio*. "An unreasonable Creature, saith he, knows how to live, *secundum quod decet ipsum* : and is it not a shame for a Man *vivere cum ignorantia bene vivendi* ? Men love darkness ; it carries with it *aculeum exprobrationis*, 'tis a bitter exprobration.

For the sin it self, the contempt of this blessed Light will further appear unto us, upon a double enquiry ;

First, Let us enquire into the heinousness of this Sin.

Secondly, Into the Reasons, and Inducements, that lead men to it.

First, The heinousness of this Sin will appear upon four aggravations, that the Text puts upon it.

I. The Persons that refuse it, *Men*. See before.

II. The positive affection that they shew to it ; it is *dilexerunt* ; they loved darkness, they delighted in it. And that makes it a wilful, perverse, resolute, affected Ignorance. They were in Darkness, and they loved darkness ; they were ignorant, and they would be ignorant. To be in darkness, is pitiful, we count it a calamity ; but to love darkness, and ignorance, to hate knowledge, and to put it far from us ; that's an heinous impiety.

'Tis not said, They approved Darkness, and disapproved Light : No ; it is possible, they may let it into their understandings, but they shut it out of their affections ; it may prevail for conviction, but not for conversion. It is not so much *cæcitas mentis*, as *cordis*, when our heart turns from it ; we may yield our Judgment to the Verity, but not our Affection to the Piety of Religion ; deny the power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. refuse the love of it, 2 Thes. ii. 10. Our Saviour shews the perverseness of this sin ; *Nolumus hunc regnare*, We will not have this man to rule over us. They have no exception against his Person : *This Man* ; they charge no fault upon him, they have no suspicion of his Government ; it is not *Dominere*, or Tyranny, it is *regnare*, a gracious Regiment : but it comes to *Nolumus*, they have no phancies or affection to him, and therefore they refuse him. That is the first aggravation ; it is *Dilexerunt*, they loved Darkness. It is not *privatio luminis*, but *aversio voluntatis* ; as *Aquinas* expresses it. It is the highest pitch of impiety, to say, *Nolumus intelligere*, Psal. xxxv.

III. A third aggravation of this contempt of Christ is in the comparison *μᾶλλον*, rather ; and that makes it more full, an act of choice, and election ; it is an undervaluing of Light, and a preferring of Darkness. *Prælatio unius sine contumelia alterius non potest procedere*, saith *Tertullian*. It shews us *insignem contumeliam infidelitatis*, the high Contumely, and Indignity that Christ and his Gospel suffers from Infidelity. They, that know no better Condition, let them love Darkness ; they know not what Light means. I, but when it is Elective, a preferring of Darkness before Light ; when Light and Darkness are both set before thee ; the ugly and loathsome face of Ignorance and Unbelief, and the beautiful face of Truth, and Piety : then to turn scornfully from the knowledge of Christ, and to run thine head into the Lap, and Bosom of Ignorance, it is an high Indignity. *Diabolum Deo præponit*, saith the Father ; *comparationem videtur egisse, qui utrumque cognoverunt, & judicatum pronuntiâsse Diabolum meliorem*. It gives the Devil the preheminance before God himself. Thus *Chrysostome* brings in the Devil insulting, that he carries it clear away from God, in the World's estimation. That's the third aggravation ; It is Elective.

IV. A fourth Aggravation of that contempt of Christ is in the degrees of the Object, light and darkness, words of intention and extremity. Christ and his Gospel are clear, perfect light, nothing but light : Infidelity, and living without Christ, 'tis gross, palpable, utter darkness. Had there been any abatement, or mixture in these two, a demurr in our Choice had been more excusable ; in some light there may be some darkness, as at day-break : and in some darkness there may be some light, as at the shutting in of the Evening : Here is place for some possible comparison. So in any man, be he never so enlightened, there

there may be some darkness of error, or infirmity. *In optimis nonnihil est pessimi*; *Serm. II.* and a wicked man may have some rayes of light. But Christ, and his Gospel are all light, *flos lucis*; sin and ignorance of Christ, are *blackness of darkness*. They talk of a Prospective, that can discover dark spots in the Sun; but no eye, or observation, can discern the least shadow of darkness in the *Sun of righteousness*. *God is light, and in him is no darkness*. Infidelity is darkness, and in it is no light. Were this Sun in an Eclipse, or under a cloud, haply we may mistake it: but when it shines in the midst of heaven, in its full strength, (nay, *the day of Christ shall be as the light of seven days in one*, *Isai. xxx. 26.*) to despise so glorious a light, to chuse such hideous darkness, 'tis out of measure sinful. *Wo be to them that call such light, darkness; and such darkness, light*, *Isai. v. 20.*

Ye have seen the heinousness of this Contempt: Let us enquire,

Secondly, Into the Causes, and Inducements, what may be the the Reasons, that make men so unreasonable, to love darkness, and to hate light. Briefly, take these four;

I. *Tenebræ connaturales*. We are born in darkness, and so we love to continue. Every thing likes best in its own element; and darkness and ignorance, it is our original. "The day of our conception, saith *Bernard*, 'tis like the day of the Creation, *vesperè & manè*, the evening and the morning, it begins from darkness: "*Ex utero ignorantie in lucem virtutis expavesimus*; we are conceived in the womb "of ignorance, and we cry like Children, and are afraid to be brought forth, and "born into light. *Eò magis territi, quò magis illuminati*, saith *Fulgentius*. Light affrights us. The Religion we were born in, the Faith of our Fore-fathers: *Symmachus* pleads that for the Pagans, and the Papists joyn with him. They will have *fidem ex traduce*, by traduction, and tradition; and with *Joseph* and *Mary*, they seek their Saviour amongst their kindred, and old acquaintance; not in the Temple. *Fumus patrius igne alieno luculentior*. Owl-light serves best for such Believers; they are acquainted with darkness, and will continue in it. That is the first: *Tenebræ connaturales*.

II. *They love darkness, hate light*; *Lux habet vim expurgativam*; It hath a virtue and power to awaken us. Darkness breeds drowsiness, brings on sleep. *Conticinium noctis*, all is hushed then, we may rest quietly. Sleep, and Darkness; Light, and Waking; they are *συνεχόμενα*, connatural, and contemporary. Naturally we are all sick of a Lethargy, the *Spirit of slumber* is upon us, and we would not be diseased. Now ignorance shuts the windows, draws the curtains, closes the Eyes, lays the pillow of security under our heads, lulls us asleep: but the Gospel, that calls, and wakens us, as the Mariners did *Jonah*, *Why sleepest thou, O Sleeper?* It is the voice of the Gospel, *The night is past, the day is come, it is time to awaken*. Diligence watches in the night; but it is shameful sluggishness, not to waken in the day. Christ, as the morning Star, awakened the Patriarchs; to us he is *Sol meridianus*, and shall we still slumber?

III. *Lux*, it is *provocativa laboris*: and that is a third exception they take against it. Light calls to labour. *The Sun rises, and man goes forth to his work, and to his labour until the Evening*. The Traveller walks whilst it is light; the Labourer works whilst it is light. There are *twelve hours in the day*, wherein men walk, and labour, *John i. 11*. Were light only to be looked on, it were another matter, 'twould not be so offensive. To some there is *libido intellectus*, an Itch of Curiosity to pry into all Truths. We can acquaint our selves with the notional part of Religion, but not with the practical. Were *David's Root*, and *Zechary's Branch* to be only a Tree of Knowledge, our Teeth would water at it; but 'tis a Tree of Life, that makes us disgust it. Christianity is not for a Frontlet 'twixt our eyes only, but as a Tablet on our hands: not a light to our eyes only for Knowledge, and Contemplation, but a light to our feet for Guidance, and Direction. O, the work of Faith, the labour of love, the travelling to Salvation, that says hard to us! O, 'tis a shame for us, to loyter out so glorious a light. *Why stand ye all the day idle? Dormire satius est, quàm isto modo vigilare*, saith *St. Augustine*. The Patriarchs had their *Antilucanos labores*, wrought by Candle-light; while it was yet dark, with *Mary*, they sought their Saviour.

And

Serm. II.

And as light calls for labour, so this labour must be employed in Works of light, not in deeds of darkness. Especially *Festum lucis, operibus lucis celebrandum*: this *Θεοπαλιν*, this Feast must be celebrated with Works of light. *The night is past, saith Paul, the day is come, walk decently, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness.* The modern Jews give a strange direction, that their People must drink so largely on their Feast of *Purim*, till they know no difference betwixt *Aruch Haman*, and *Barach Mordecai*; blessed *Mordecai*, and cursed *Haman*. Shall Christians so far forget themselves, till they know no odds betwixt light and darkness, Christ and *Belial*? Nay, as *St. Augustine* speaks of the Heathenish revelings in the honour of their Gods: *Tutius irritantur Dii tales temperantiâ, quam placentur luxuriâ*: 'twere safer to prophane their Feasts with temperance, and sobriety; than preposterously to celebrate them with excess and luxury.

IV. Light is thus unwelcome to the World, 'tis *manifestiva sordium*. Darkness veils and conceals: Light doth detect and discover our shame. That's the Grand Quarrel the World hath against it; therefore they hate the Light. *The World hates me, because I testify of it, that their works are nought*, Joh. vii. 7. Evil works saith "*Parisiensis*, close up the eyes of the Soul, that it cannot see the light; *quasi manibus suis claudunt oculos, qui malis operibus delectantur*, they lay their hands upon "their eyes that they might not see. Dark Shops fit best for bad Wares. *These spectacles are too true, said he, for my false eyes.* Here is the reason of all the malice the World raises against Religion. *ὅτι 'tis ἰσχυρισμός*, 'tis still finding fault with us. *Tollamus justum, quia contrarius est nobis*: *St. Augustine*, interprets it of Christ, and the rage of the world against Him. The Light of his Doctrine discovers, or the Holiness of it reproves, and condemns us. Did Religion consist only in some general truths, the world could away with it; but it meddles with our lives, molests, and haunts our Consciences; that makes us abhor it. *Amant veritatem lucentem, oderunt redarguentem*, saith *St. Augustine*. Like *Jonah*, when the Sun grows hot, and beats upon his head, then he falls a chafing. *Quid igne lucente pulchrius? quid urente molestius?* saith *St. Augustine*. Like the Satyr in *Plutarch*, that when he found Fire first, delighted in the sight of it; but when he came near it, and felt it burn, and singe him, he flung it away, and quenched it presently: or a People they tell us of under the Torrid Zone, that rage, and curse the Sun, because it scorches them.

One word of the last Particular in the Text; which is the

Third, The heavy doom, and sentence, that this contempt of Christ brings upon the World, 'tis their condemnation. And it carries with it the force, and strength of a threefold demonstration.

First, 'Tis *The condemnation*; 'tis *demonstratio justitiæ condemnationis*, it makes their Sin unexcusable, their damnation confessedly due, beyond all exception. Christians, that will not lay hold on the offers of Grace, of all men, have no cause to murmur, or impute their damnation to God's secret purpose. They need not enquire into *Parcarum tabulas, sed in proprias conscientias*, and there read the Justice of their condemnation. *St. Augustine's* Case concerning some, is far different from the Case of such men: *Quidam ideo non salvantur, non quia ipsi nolunt, sed quia Deus non vult.* We shrink at that saying; but who pities him, that wilfully runs into his own destruction? They that live out of the Pale of the Church, are like men, that live in an unwholsom air, and far from Physicians, if they fall sick, there is but one way with them. But *is there no Balm in Gilead? are there no Physicians there?* Make use of such, or you perish wilfully. Infidelity in a Christian, 'tis a kind of *ἀνισοχέρεια* a self-murthering sin; such forsake their own mercies, put them away, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, *Acts xiii. 46.* *He that believes hath the witness in himself*, 1 Joh. 5. 10. So, he that will not believe, hath a self-condemning within himself, carries about him the Copy and Transcript of the sentence of damnation. Hence we see Christ refers it to themselves to judge, *Mat. xxi. 40.* what they deserve for the refusing of him; Ask them, *What will the Lord of the Vineyard do unto those Husbandmen*; that reject his Son, when he is sent unto them? They all answered, *He will miserably destroy those wicked men.* Their damnation is just, themselves being Judges. That's the first; 'tis *demonstratio justitiæ condemnationis*.

Secondly,

Secondly, 'Tis their Condemnation; 'tis *demonstratio certitudinis condemnationis*, Sermon II. it makes their damnation unavoidable, their State irrecoverable, sets them beyond all hope of pardon. *Perire necesse est, pœnitere nolentes*, saith Bernard. The wilful contempt of Christ, and his Gospel, doth not only merit, but effectually seal up their condemnation. Other sins are damnable; but obstinate Infidelity, 'tis a sin unpardonable. *If our Gospel be still hid*, ye will see no light in it; 'tis *hid to them that perish*: 'tis a shrewd sign, such men are Cast-aways. Other sins are *peccata contra Officium*; this, 'tis *peccatum contra remedium*. He that spils, or spits out the Medicine; Salvation it self cannot save such a man. 'Tis one thing to be condemned in *Foro legis*, to be cast by the Law, there lies a Writ of pardon issuable against that sentence out of an higher Court; but to be condemned in *Foro Evangelii*, if the Tribunal of Christ, and the Gospel cast thee, wo be unto thee. The curse of the Law, 'tis by Christ reverfable: but St. Paul tells us of another curse, the Curse of the Gospel: *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed*, that's *Anathema, Maran-atha*. A curse unavoidable; *Maran-atha, Dominus venit*, the Lord comes to confirm it.

He hath sent his servants, nay, his Son, to call thee; and then, *post Filium, exercitus*, Mat. xxii. 7. He hath none to send now, but an Army of Souldiers to havock, and destroy thee. *Bring these mine enemies, that will not I should reign over them, and slay them before me*, Luk. xix. 27. That's the second, *Demonstratio certitudinis condemnationis*.

Thirdly, 'Tis their Condemnation; 'tis *demonstratio gravitatis condemnationis*, it encreases the heaviness of their condemnation, makes it unsupportable. Sins against the means of Grace, are of greatest provocations. God makes the Furnace of Hell seven times hotter for such, than for other offenders, scourges them with Scorpions; they suck out the dregs of the Cup of vengeance. He hath sworn the destruction of unbelievers, *Heb. iii. 18*. And he will laugh, and mock at their destruction, *Prov. i. 26*. God's swearing, and God's laughing, and mocking, bode bitter displeasure, heavy indignation.

'Twas the great Objection the Pagans made against Christianity in the Primitive Times; that it brought extraordinary Calamities upon the World, Wars, and Plagues, and Famines, and Earthquakes: they imputed them all to the Christian Religion. And several Fathers make their several Apologies. St. Augustine yields it, and grants it to them, says it was most just it should be so; now the Gospel hath been Preached, and that Christ is come, *Mundus factus est sicut malus servus, sciens voluntatem Domini, & ideo gravius punitur*; the World, 'tis like the bad Servant in the Gospel, that knows his Masters will, and so must be beaten with more stripes. *Gravius lex agnita, quam ignorata, condemnat*, saith Fulgentius. Nay, saith Salvian, *Reatus impii, pium nomen*; the very name of a Christian shall add to their torment: they shall curse their Christendom, wish they had been *Turks*, or Pagans, never heard of the name of Christ, or the sound of the Gospel. Tribulation, and anguish upon the Soul of the Christian first, and then of the Gentile. A wicked Christian lies lowest in Hell, undergoes the worst of all God's Judgments; because he hath refused the best of all his Mercies. The sweetest Wine makes the sharpest Vinegar; and Mercy abused, turns to fiercest Indignation.

To close, and wind up all, with reflection upon our selves;

The Text affords us a threefold view.

First, See here the Happiness of our Condition.

Secondly, See here the Evidence of our Conviction.

Thirdly, See here the Burthen of our Condemnation.

First, View the Happiness of our Condition; *In sæculo illuminato*: we enjoy a chearful glorious Light; not the light of Nature only, or of the Law, or of God's Example; but the most glorious Light of Christ shining in his Gospel. *One day of the Son of man is more glorious than a thousand other.*

This light is fully exhibited, already come, made a perfect discovery of all saving Truth. *I know when the Messias is come, he will tell us all things*, Joh. iv. 25. We need not pray with Manoah, Lord, send the man again to us, to teach us more fully: He hath revealed the whole Counsel of God to us. We

Serm. II. We are within the Hemisphere where this light actually shines, born within the Tropick of the Church, where the Sun constantly moves.

We are too in *loco illuminato*: Our Vally of vision, is like the Valley of *Ajalon*, where the Sun stands still over us, and is daily culminant; as they report of *Rhodes*, where there is not a day goes over their heads, but the Sun shines clear upon them.

Secondly, View the Evidence of our Conviction, and take it in *St. Cyprian's* words, *Hæc summa delicti est, nolle agnoscere, quem ignorare non potes.* Cypr. For us, not to see light, when it shines so clearly, what excuse can there be? *Fidem in domo fidei non habere*, as the same Father speaks: to live faithless in the house, and School of Faith. Let Heathens plead Ignorance; and Christians, in darker Times, and Places, say, they have not heard of him; Errour, and Wickedness, amongst us, is *Dæmonium meridianum*, a Devil at Noon-day; like the Sin of *Abalom*, before all Israel, and before the Sun.

Thirdly, View here the Burthen of our Condemnation; if we rebel against the light, nothing remains but *ἡ ἀποκρίσις τοῦ κριτοῦ*, a fearful expectation of judgment. See whither our unproficiency brings us. *Descendent in Gehennam, ut illic discant, quod hic credere noluerunt*, saith *Ambrose*. And *in æternam pœnam serò credent, qui in æternam vitam credere noluerunt*. Eternal death shall lay hold on them, that would not lay hold on eternal life. We must go to learn that in Hell, we will not believe here. We, that sleep out this day of Grace, shall hereafter awaken, but little to our ease. How uncomfortable will it be then to awaken, when our Sun is set? *Parisiensis* terms such, *Vespertilioes fidei, post occasum Solis evigilant*; like Bats, that never look forth till the Sun be down. As *St. Augustine*, We shall be like those, who *ex Lethargicis fiunt Phrenetici*; we shall awaken out of a Lethargy, and fall into a Phrensie; out of a Lethargy of Errour, into a Phrensie of Horrour. *Nazianzene* shall put a conclusion to all, alluding to that place of *St. Paul*, *He shall come in flaming Fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel*. He came before as a shining light, to call, and command them, but he was rejected: Hereafter he shall come in a flaming Fire, to consume and destroy them.

Which that we may escape, let us desire Almighty God, that, *In this our day, we may know the time of our Visitation; that, walking here as Children of light in this present World, we may be meet partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light in the World to come: And that for Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with the Father, &c.*

ON
CHRISTMAS-DAY.

The Third Sermon.

I St. JOHN III. 8.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.



AT the first hearing, and reading of these words, you see the Text, and the Time, suit well together. The Time is the Celebration of our Saviour's Incarnation, and Nativity, his taking upon him our Nature, the engaging himself in our Cause, for the subduing, and vanquishing the Enemies of our Salvation.

As on this day, our *David* descended into the Valley, to encounter *Goliath*, and hath got the Victory. *He hath spoiled Principalities, and Powers*, and all those *spiritual wickednesses* that had enthralled us. That's the Mercy of this day; and 'tis the matter of the Text: which is a brief, but yet a pregnant description of our Christian belief: 'tis *Evangelium abbreviatum*, an Abridgment of the Gospel. It presents unto us that great *Mystery of Godliness*; *God manifested in the Flesh*. A secret unknown to the Sons of men by nature; but *God hath revealed it to us by his Spirit*.

St. *Augustine* tells us, that he had read in some Philosophers, That *the Word was in the beginning*. The God-head, and Divinity of *Christ* was not wholly unknown to them: but, he saith, he never read in any of their Books, That *Verbum caro factum est*, That *the Word was made Flesh*, and *suffered for us*. That was a *Mystery hidden from ages and generations*: 'tis a matter of pure Faith, and of supernatural revelation.

And this is the sum, and substance of the Text; and 'tis of a large compass, and comprehension. It begins at our Saviour's Incarnation; and reaches to his Passion, and even to his Resurrection. Here are *Cunæ Nativitatis*, the Cradle, or Cratch of his Birth, and Nativity, and here is also *Currus triumphi*, the Chariot of his Victory, and Triumph; his subduing, and vanquishing the Devil, that great Enemy of our Salvation.

For the Words themselves, we may resolve them into these three Particulars.

First, Here is the Mystery of Christ's Incarnation; *The Son of God was manifested*.

Secondly, Here is the Work he undertakes, the Mercy, and the Benefit he accomplishes for us; *He destroys the works of the Devil*.

Thirdly, Here is the design, and intendment of this Work; He made it his business, set himself to do it; 'twas for this end, that he was incarnate; *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil*.

Come we to the

First Particular; The Mystery of our Saviour's Incarnation; *The Son of God was manifested*. And this points out the Author of this great work, to whom it belonged to vanquish Satan, and destroy his works. And it will appear to us more fully, in these three qualifications of it.

First, Is the Propriety.

Secondly, Is the Appropriation.

Thirdly, The Oeconomy, and dispensation, that was observed in it.

O

First,

Serm. III. First, Is the Propriety, to whom this work of subduing the Devil properly belongs; that's to God.

Secondly, Is the Appropriation, to which of the three Persons in the God-head it is especially appropriated, and ascribed; 'tis to God the Son: and then,

Thirdly, Is the Oeconomy, and dispensation, or the manner of doing it (for so the Fathers call our Saviour's Incarnation) 'tis here termed by St. John, *His Manifestation*.

First, The first thing considerable, is the Propriety, to whom this work of subduing the Devil, and destroying his works, properly belongeth; that's God. And God only was to do this work.

I. He only had right to do it; to him it pertained.

II. He only had power to do it; he only could effect it. In him was both *ἐξουσία* and *δύναμις*, both right, and authority; and then strength and sufficiency, to atchieve this Master-piece of destroying Satan's Kingdom from amongst the Sons of men.

I. He only had right to do it; whether we consider him either as the Judge, or as the Party wronged:

1. He had the only right of destroying Satan's works, as the Judge to whom the Devil, and all the Powers of darkness were obnoxious. The Devil hath withdrawn his obedience, but cannot avoid, or shake off his subjection to God's dominion. All Powers, and Principalities, are subject unto him, Ephes. i. Thus we see, the Devils tremble at his appearance. They are fain to crave, and beg his sufferance; they confess his power of punishing, and tormenting them.

2. God hath right to destroy these works of Satan, as *pars laesa*, as the party wronged. The mischief indeed, that Satan doth, cannot reach to God; but yet the wrong, and injury, is principally God's. And so God's right of destroying Satan's works, 'tis *jus talionis*. He set himself to deface, and destroy the works of God; he maligned every print, and footstep of God, desired to abolish it. Especially his hatred, and spight, was at the choice piece of God's Workmanship; that, on which God had bestowed most cost, and stamped upon it his own holy Image, mankind; that Satan sought to destroy. Well, what saith St. Paul? *He that destroys the Temple of God, him will God destroy*; 1 Cor. iii. 17. He is requited in kind. We may insult over Satan, as David doth over his Enemy, Psal. ix. 6. *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end, like as the Cities that thou hast destroyed*. The Devil, he sets himself to destroy the works of God; 'tis just, and right, God should destroy the works of the Devil. As God only had Right, so,

II. He only had strength and power, to effect this destruction of Satan's works. 'Tis no easie thing to dispossess Satan, and to vanquish him. 'Tis no petty Order (as the *Papists* make it) to be a true Exorcist, and to subdue the Devil: our Saviour shews it to be an harder work; Luke xi. 21. He compares the Devil to a strong man armed, that keeps his Palace, his goods are in peace; it must be a stronger than he, that shall come upon him, and overcome him, and take from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divide his spoils.

Try thy strength but with one sin, one work of the Devil, thou wilt find it a work beyond thy strength to cast him out, and destroy him. As the Father in the Gospel, that had his Child possessed of a Devil, confessed to Christ, *LORD, I brought him to thy Disciples, but they could not do it*. Well, what saith our Saviour? *Bring him to me*; He cast him out with power, and authority; *Jussu & increpitu ejecit Dæmonia*, saith Tertullian; *non suasu, aut rogatu*; He removes out the Devil powerfully, mightily. He casts out Devils by the finger of God. The least touch of his strength destroys Satan.

In this Case, it fares with us, as it did with the Woman troubled with a Bloody Issue; no humane means could help her, or cure her: but the touch of the hem of Christ's Garment recovered her presently. See, there were two small helps, in compare, did this great work.

1. There was *minimum objecti*, the least part of Christ, but the hem of his garment; and then,

2. There was *minimum actus*, the least touch of Faith. Omnipotency can work by the smallest means.

That's

That's the first thing, the Propriety : it belongs to God.

Secondly, A second thing considerable, is the Appropriation of this Work. 'Tis ascribed to the second Person in the glorious God-head ; to the Son of God, or to God the Son. They are equivalent Expressions : if he be the Son of God, he is equal, and all one with God. *This is the true God, and Eternal Life*, saith Saint John, in the closure of this Epistle. For God to beget a Son that is not God, were to beget, *non Filium, sed Monstrum*, saith Saint Augustine. 'Twere monstrous, and unnatural for a man not to beget a man, but some other creature ; 'twere so for the Son of God, begotten of God, not to be perfect God.

So then this work of destroying of Satan, 'tis the work of Christ, the Son of God. The Devils themselves confess and acknowledge it ; *Mark i. 24.* The Devil cryed out upon Jesus of Nazareth, *Art thou come to destroy us ? I know who thou art, The holy One of God. Utinam quomodo Dæmones judicem, sic homines agnoscerent Salvatorem.* Aug. Conc. de 5. Hæres.

And that the Son of God should undertake this work, there are two Congruities.

I. The first Congruity is grounded upon his Relation, in that he is the Son of God. And suitable to this, there were two works of the Devil to be destroyed ; and none so fit to do it, as the Son of God.

1. The first work of Satan, was to make us degenerate from our Original, and to become the Children of the Devil ; that was our woful condition. *John viii. 44.* Christ tells the Jews plainly, *Ye are of your Father, the Devil.* This work must be destroyed by our Spiritual Adoption ; that rescues us out of that cursed Family, and reduces us to a new Son-ship, makes us become the Children of God. Now, who so fit to make us Adopted Sons, as the natural Son of God ? This Paul makes the end of Christ's Incarnation, *Gal. iv. 5. God sent his Son, made of a Woman—that we might receive the adoption of Sons.* That's the first Work, the natural Son of God is fittest to make us adopted Sons.

2. The second work of the Devil was the defacing, and destroying that holy Image of God, in which we were created, and so stamping upon our Souls that blot, and blemish of the Devils similitude. Holiness, and Righteousness, that's the Image of God, that the Devil destroyed in us. Wickedness, and Impiety, that's the Image of Satan, and that he printed upon us. Now, who so fit to deface the Image of Satan, and to repair the blessed Image of God upon our Souls, as the Son of God, who is the lively express Image of God the Father ? That's the end of our Predestination, *That we should be conformable unto the Image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many Brethren*, Rom. viii. 29.

That's the first Congruity, grounded upon our Saviour's Relation : in that he is the Son of God ; and so the Image, and Brightness of his Father's glory.

II. A second Congruity, why Christ should undertake this work, to destroy the works of the Devil, is grounded upon that special Attribute, which is ascribed to the Son of God ; that's the Attribute of Wisdom. The Attribute of Power, that's appropriated to the Father, he is the Father Almighty : the Attribute of Love, and Goodness, that's appropriated to the third Person, God the Holy Ghost ; he is the Spirit of Love : and Wisdom, that's Attributed to God the Son ; *Christ, he is the Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. *In him are all the treasures of Wisdom*, Coloss. ii. 3. And Wisdom was that, which was seen in this work ; the great Wisdom, the hidden Wisdom, the unsearchable Wisdom of God. Satan, he wrought our ruine by craft and subtilty : he had not *potentiam cogendi*, but *astutiam fallendi* ; he did not compel us, but he did beguile us. He chose an Instrument suitable to himself, by which he destroyed us, *Gen. iii. 1. The Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field.* Well ? did craft and subtilty ruine us ? Here is Wisdom of God to restore us. *He takes the wise in their own craftiness*, saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 19. he turns the craft of this old Achitophel into foolishness, outreaches Satan in all his policies. Here is our comfort, as Augustine speaks ; Surely, *astutus est Diabolus, sed Christus Dei sapientia est.* The Devil is crafty ; I, but Christ is the Wisdom of God.

That's the second, the Appropriation ; 'Tis The Son of God. We proceed,

Thirdly, To the third particular, that's the manner of effecting this work, the Oeconomy,

Serm. III. *nomos*, and Dispensation observed in it; that's called here, *His manifestation*. St. Paul calls it, *God manifested in the flesh*. And so the Greek Church honoured this Festival with that term of Θεοπαρεια, the appearance of God. We may say truly, what the *Lycaonians* said falsely, *Acts* xiv. 11. *God is come down to us in the likeness of Man*.

And this his Incarnation, it is called a *Manifestation*. It is a ponderous, and a weighty word: it prevents divers Errours, that have been conceived concerning our Saviour.

I. It is a *Manifestation*, that's *Præexistentis representatio*. I note it, against that cursed Heresie revived by *Socinus*, that wickedly taught, that *Christ's Incarnation* was his first production, not only his Mission, or *Manifestation*. Whereas *Manifestation* is the Representation of that which was before, but did not appear before. By which false Doctrine he despoils our Saviour of his Deity, making him only a Titular, and Nuncupative God, a God by Concession, and Grant, not by Nature, and Eternal generation. What saith Christ of himself? *Before Abraham was, I am*. And again, *John* xvii. *Glorifie me, O Father, with the glory which I had with thee, before the World was*. His goings forth were from everlasting, saith the Prophet *Micah*, Chap. v. St. Paul teaches us an Orthodox Confession, *Rom.* ix. *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen*.

II. Christ's Incarnation, 'tis his *Manifestation*, that is, *invisibilis apparitio*, the appearing of him, who before was invisible. And this I note against the *Arians*; who to shew some difference 'twixt the Nature of God the Father, and of God the Son, Heretically taught, that *God the Father* was of a substance invisible; but that *God the Son*, even before his Incarnation, and his divine Nature, was always visible, and to be beheld by a created Eye; whereas his God-head dwelt in the Light, that no eye could attain unto. *Nemo nos fallat eorum, qui dicunt invisibilem Patrem, & visibilem Filium*, saith St. *Augustine*. St. Paul, magnifying the mercy of Christ in his conversion, concludes with this Doxology, *1 Tim.* i. *Now, to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, only wise God, be honour, and glory, for ever, and ever. Amen*.

III. Christ's Incarnation is his *Manifestation*, that's *prænnuntiati exhibitio*, he is now really and actually exhibited to the Sons of men; before he was promised only, but now that promise is fully performed to us. I note it against the blindness, and obstinacy of the *Jews*, that will not confess Christ is come in the flesh, but still expect and wait for his appearance. Thus that Speech of Christ is fulfilled in them, *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not*. A strange darkness, that, when Light is present, doth still continue darkness. Surely that darkness is blindness, that's their misery. But 'tis our happiness that we enjoy this blessed *Manifestation*. *Spectare jucundius, quam expectare*. The *Patriarchs* expected him, but we enjoy him. Let the hearts of those rejoyce, that seek the Lord. *Abraham* rejoyced at the fore-sight of this Day: his, and all the *Patriarchs* joy, was but *gaudium quærentium*, but our joy is *gaudium invenientium*; we have found what they sought. O, let us acknowledge him. Let us take up *Philip's* joyful Profession, *Joh.* i. *We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write*. And then let's add *Nathanael's* Adoration of him, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*: And then let's renew *David's* Benediction, *Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord*.

For better understanding this great Mystery of our Religion, that the Son of God by his Incarnation is made manifest, we must know, that it was a gracious *Manifestation*, rather than a glorious. His divine Nature appeared in *specie aliena*, non in propria, under the veil of his Humanity, not in the bright-beams of his Divinity; that was made manifest by a Personal Union to his humane Nature: We saw that Flesh, in which the God-head dwelt bodily. *Vidimus indumentum, non indutum*; as we say, we see a Man, when yet we see only his garment, in which he is, and with which he is cloathed. The beams of his Divinity did break forth in his Heavenly Sermons, in his transcendent Holiness, in his gracious Speeches, in his wonderful Works; all exceeding the Ability of any Creature; all testifying that he was the Son of God. These made St. *John* say, Chap. i. *We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, and truth*.

And

And this degree, and temper of his Manifestation was thus ordered, and proportioned, for these considerations.

1. This Manifestation under the veil of his Flesh was fitted *pro captu nostro*, for our capacity, we could not otherwise have beheld him. The incomprehensible splendour of his God-head, and Divinity would have overwhelmed our understandings, and swallowed them up. His Flesh concealed him; true, and yet it presented him, made him the fitter for us to look upon; our weak eyes could not otherwise behold him. As *Moses* his vail, 'twas an help, not an hinderance to the People's converse with him, they could not behold the glory of his countenance; such was the vail of Christ's humanity. *Noli contemnere nubem carnis; nube tegitur, non ut obscuratur Sol, sed ut temperetur*; Aug. We can fix our eyes upon the Sun, when 'tis under a cloud; we cannot do so, when 'tis in its full splendour.

2. This Manifestation was under the veil of the Flesh, *pro modulo fidei*, to make way for the exercise of Faith; and Faith was to have a principal part in the work of our Redemption. And the property of that is to believe that which we see not. And therefore, that our Faith might have what to believe, he concealed his Divinity under the veil of his Humanity; as 'tis said of *Thomas*, *Tetigit hominem, credidit Deum*: He touched, and beheld the Flesh of Christ, but his Faith, that believed his God-head, and Divinity. Notwithstanding this Manifestation in the flesh, there must be a Revelation to our Faith, that may make us confess with *Peter*, *Thou art the Son of the living God*.

3. His Manifestation was under the covert, and veil of the flesh, *pro modo victoriae*, as the fittest way to vanquish, and conquer, and destroy the Devil.

1. It was a fit way to requite the Devil. He wrought our ruine by a counterfeit Incarnation, appearing to our first Parents in another habit; and Christ, he works Satan's ruine by a real Incarnation.

2. This was done, to bring on the Devil to this encounter, by which he might be destroyed. He durst not have assaulted our Saviour, appearing in his glory. But there was *esca humanitatis*, and *hamus divinitatis*, the Hook of Christ's Divinity was baited with the Flesh of his Humanity; and so this great *Leviathan* was taken, and destroyed. As *Goliath*, when he saw *David* coming towards him so poorly provided, naked, and unarmed, he made no question he should soon over-master him: so the Devil looking upon our Saviour's Humanity, but not perceiving his God-head, and Divinity, entred the Lists, and by him was vanquished.

Come we to the

Second particular of the Text; that's the Work, and Employment of our Incarnate Saviour. What's that? the Text tells us, it was *to destroy the works of the devil*.

The fruit, and benefit, of our Saviour's Incarnation, hath other expressions in Scripture. *He came to seek, and to save, that which was lost*, Matth. xviii. 11. *He came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. *I am come, saith Christ, that they might have life*, John x. 10. *I am the Bread of Life, that came down from Heaven, and gives Life unto the World*, John vi. 41. These, and many more than these, are the sweet expressions that the Scripture makes of our Saviours Incarnation. But they are all comprehended in this of St. John, it was *to destroy the works of the devil*.

And that affords us this Observation; That 'tis Christ's Office and Employment to destroy the works of the Devil. Here are two things observable.

First, What's that Christ opposes? they are *the works of the Devil*.

Secondly, What's the opposition he makes against them? 'Tis *to destroy them*.

First, What's that which Christ sets himself against, and opposes? they are *the works of the Devil*. So then, in general, the Work for which Christ came into the World, 'tis a spiritual work, to oppose *spiritual wickednesses*, as St. Paul calls them, He comes to destroy the Kingdom of Satan; not to destroy the Kingdoms of the Earth, and to invest the Saints in a Wordly Dominion, as the Pope's Canonists, and many now dream. I; and they walk in their dream, and go stiffly about it; and so turn Christianity into a Worldly Policy. 'Twas the erroneous conceit of the Jews, they promised to themselves an outward secular Kingdom of the *Messias*; no, our Saviour tells them, *the Kingdom of God is within them*: in their souls, and spirits,

Luke

Serm. III. Luke: xvii. 21. The Gospel is conversant, *in criminibus, non in possessionibus*; in mortifying of sins, not in invading of Possessions, as *Bernard* speaks, And *Chrysostome* makes a great difference 'twixt earthly Kingdoms, and the Kingdom of the Gospel. Secular Kings, they have to do with the Bodies of men: the Ministers of Christ's Kingdom, they are employed about the Souls of men; they use *bodily* weapons, we *spiritual*; they fight against *Barbarians*, we against *Devils*.

For better understanding this Object, which Christ comes to destroy, take notice of it in two particulars.

I. Let's see the extension of the matter: 'tis *opera Diaboli, the works of the Devil*.

II. Observe the limitation; this destruction that Christ works, 'tis confined to *the works of the Devil*.

I. See the extension of the Object that Christ comes to destroy; 'tis *The works of the Devil*. The Enquiry then must be, what's meant by *the works of the Devil*? The Scripture reduces it to two heads:

1. Sin, that's the work of the Devil.

2. Death, that's the work of the Devil; and Christ destroys both. For *death*, *St. Paul* makes that one main end of Christ's Incarnation, *Heb. ii. 14. He himself took part of Flesh and Blood, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil*. But the Text aims at that other work of the Devil, *sin*; To that therefore I will confine my discourse.

So then, the Observation is briefly thus much: *Sin, 'tis the work of the Devil*. And this expression of the Apostle's, hath a threefold intendment in it. *St. John* calls sin, *the Work of the Devil*.

I. 'Tis a speech *justæ imputationis*, the Devil is justly chargeable with the guilt of our sins.

II. 'Tis a speech *magnæ detestationis*, it lays an heavy aggravation and odiousness upon sin; 'tis a work of the Devil.

III. 'Tis a speech *gratiosæ commiserationis*, it imports pity, and commiseration towards mankind.

First, 'Tis a speech of just imputation; the Devil is chargeable with the guilt of our sins.

1. Sin, 'tis *opus diaboli*; 'tis no work of God then; far be that from the thought of any man; he made man upright, and innocent. The Text frees him from this imputation. *Deus non est autor, cujus est ultor*, saith *Fulgentius*. Sure, he is not the author of that, of which he is the destroyer. Let no man say, *that God tempts him to sin*. 'Tis a strange perverseness in some men, if there be any good in them, they ascribe it to themselves, but that which is evil in them, they impute it to God.

2. Sin, 'tis *opus diaboli*; it must be cautiously understood, and with good advice. The *Manichees* put an Heretical sense upon it: as if the sins we commit, were not the acts and issues of our own free-will; and so, no way chargeable upon us: but that they are actions of another nature in us: that the Prince of darkness produced them, not we our selves. And *Augustine* confesses, that, while he was entangled in that error, it pleased him well, that the sins, which he committed, were not his own sins, but arose from something in him, which was no part of him.

3. And as they believe it Heretically, so do many in a sensual manner prophane-ly, and shift off their sins, and blame the Devil for them, not themselves. O, the Devil ow'd me a spight, now he hath paid me, he brought me to this evil. And the Devil, saith *Augustine*, gives them good leave to do so. *Gaudet diabolus, quando in eum peccata nostra rejicimus*; the Devil, saith he, is glad, when we say, he made us to sin. *Qui hoc dicit, non se accusat, non confitetur peccatum*. He, that saith so, will never repent truly of his sin. We learned this shift of our mother *Eve*: she translates her sin upon the Devil: *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*.

4. How then are our sins the Devil's works? 'tis not by a total exemption of us, and translation of our sins upon him, but by a joint communication in the guilt of them. Indeed if *Satan's* temptations be not entertained by us, then they are *Satan's* sins only, and but our tryals; but if we admit of them, and suffer his fiery darts to kindle upon us, then they are his works, and ours also. Both *suasor*, and
actor,

actor, the tempter and the actor are both guilty. As the *Lawyers* say, If one shall set a Tree in another man's ground, if the Tree take root, *cedit solo*, it belongs to the owner of the soil; but, if it take not root, 'tis his that set it there: 'Tis so with Satan's temptations; if we reject them, they are his *sins*; if we consent to them, they are his, and ours too. Serm. III.

'Tis a true Rule in Divinity, *Diabolus pater, & concupiscentia mater peccati*; the Devil is the father, but our corruption, 'tis the mother of sin. And the Devil cannot ravish our souls, but only allure them. *Suggerit Diabolus, sed non ingerit*; Bernard. He may persuade us, but cannot enforce us. 'Tis a true Speech of Bernard, *Tibi imputa, si quid pateris ab eo, qui sine te potest nihil facere*. Blame thy self, if the Devil brings thee to do that, which he cannot bring thee to, without thy will.

So then the Devil, he is the Father of sin, and it bears his name. 'Tis a work of the Devil.

1. He is the first Author, and Inventor of sin. As they, that are the first Inventors of any thing, they carry away the name of it, though others imitate it, and do the same thing. We may say of every sin what Christ saith of Lying: *The Devil is a Liar, and the Father of it. Non omnis, qui mentitur, pater mendacii est*, saith Augustine. *Sed qui à seipso habet*; such a Father of sin is the devil: He was tempted by none, imitated none, but sinned of himself; he was the first of all the creatures, that committed sin.

2. As he is the Inventor, and first Beginner, so he is the Tempter, and Misleader into sin. Our natural corruption, by which we are prone to sin, 'tis *Virus antiqui serpentis*; Cyprian. 'Tis that Venom, and Poyson, which the Devil instilled into our first Parents. Our actual sins, he hath an hand in them, he is prompting, and suggesting his wicked motions. Not only those sins, which in a special manner are called diabolical, but even our more humane transgressions, are Satan's works. Pride, and vain-glory in David's numbring the People, 'twas the Devil's work, *he stood up, and provoked David to it*; 1 Chr. xxi. 1. Peter's carnal counsel, which he gave to Christ, to save himself from death, Christ espied the Devil in it: *Get thee behind me, Satan*; Matth. xvi. 23. Ananias, and Saphira's sacrilege, and robbing of God in things dedicated to him, 'twas Satan's work: *Why hath Satan filled your hearts?* saith St. Peter to them; Act. v. 3. Judas his treachery in betraying of Christ, 'twas Satan's work: *Then entered the Devil into Judas*, Luk. xxii. 3. In all sins St. Paul tells us, *The Devil works effectually in the Children of disobedience*. And our Saviour tells the Jews, *They do the lusts of their Father the Devil*; Joh. viii. 44.

That's the first, it's a speech of just imputation.

II. Our sins are called the Devil's works; 'tis a speech *magnæ detestationis*, 'tis a speech implying loathing, and detestation. It puts upon our sinning a term of horror and abomination. To call our sins the *works of the Devil*, 'tis to flesh and blood, *Vocabulum ingentis significationis*, as Luther speaks: It sounds very harshly in a natural man's ears. We would be thought to have nothing to do with the Devil, nor that he hath any thing to do with us. We can live in sin, and yet despise the Devil, and all his works. We can make more moderate constructions of our sins, and call them, *the frailties of the flesh, the infirmities of our nature*, such as the best are subject unto. Well, this Scripture represents our sins to us in a more ghastly appearance; it will teach us to judge of sin, as God judges of it, and to see the Devil in it. What saith St. John in the beginning of the Verse? *He, that commits sin, is of the Devil*, is the Devil's drudge; Satan works in him, and by him.

And then, Is sin the Devil's work? *Non tantum Cave, sed horre*, saith Bernard; it will teach us not only to shun it, but to detest, and abhor it. As they say of some meats: If we saw the dressing, we would loath the eating of them: So, did we seriously consider, that in all our sins, the Devil hath an hand in them, that unclean spirit, that malicious spirit, that destroying spirit, it would make us flee from them, as from a Serpent, and as the matter of greatest horror, and detestation.

That's the second, 'tis a speech of detestation.

III. Sin, 'tis the Devil's work, 'tis a Speech *gratiæ commiserationis*; it implies that

Serm. III. that pity, and commiseration in God, which moved him to undertake this work for us. Our fall from God, 'twas the Devils work, and contrivance; he plotted our ruin, and beguiled us through his subtilty. The vengeance shall fall upon him; our nature, through the Grace of God, shall be rescued, and relieved. That's one reason which Divines give, why Christ redeemed not the *Devils*, but *Man-kind*, because he sinned of Malice, subverted us out of Envy; we fell by temptation, and so God accounted us more capable of remission. *Minus homo in consentiendo, quam Diabolus mala suadendo, peccavit.* Aug. I do but touch it.

I have done with the first, the Extension of the Object.

Come we,

Secondly, to the Limitation; that, which Christ came to destroy, is *the works of the Devil*, those, and only those. The works of God, those Christ came not to destroy, but to preserve, and restore, to improve, and better them. *Isai. lviii. 12. He shall be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in;* the Souls of Men, to recover them; the Lives of men; he came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them, *Luke ix. 56.* The government of men in Peace, and quietness, 'tis the work of the God of Order, and Peace, and Christ comes to establish it; *The increase of his government is peace, Isai. ix. 7.*

It must teach all undertakers of works of destruction, to carry a steady hand in so perillous a work. They had need of three *Caveats*:

1. The first *Caveat*, look to thy Warrant and Authority. Every man is not to be a destroyer, even of those things that deserve to be destroyed. *Jehu* was anointed to destroy *Baal* out of *Israel*, *Et meritum criminis, & ordo potestatis*, saith *Augustine*, are both necessary: the thing must deserve to be destroyed, and thou must have a Warrant to do it.

2. A second *Caveat*, take heed you mistake not a work of God, for a work of the Devil. Be sure, that, which thou wouldest destroy, be a work of the Devil. And then, if thy warrant will authorise that, destroy it in God's name, and spare it not; but if it be a work of God, take heed of destroying it. In this Case, thou mayest be mistaken, as *Joseph* was; supposing that to be an Adulterous brood, which was the Conception of the Holy Ghost. We may a little invert the speech of *St. Paul*, *If thou destroy that which God hath builded, thou makest thy self a transgressor.*

In Reformation, destroy *opus Diaboli*; I, but preserve *opus Dei*: Government, and Sovereignty, 'tis the work of God, his great Ordinance; *the Powers that are, are ordained of God*, *Rom. xiii. 1.* Destroy it not, *there is a blessing in it, Isai. lxv. 8.* What were this, to pull down Sovereignty? but to do, as the *Jews* did, cry out, *Save Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.* 'Tis the Title of that Psalm, which is the *Kingly Psalm*; *Psal. lxxv.* the Psalm for Government; *David* stiles it, *Nè perdas*; Destroy it not. And that will bring in the Wise man's *Caveat*, *Prov. xxx. 31. Nè insurrexeris*; Encounter it not: and that will remind us of *St. Paul's* charge, *Nè resistas*; Oppose it not: and that will inform us of *Solomon's* Warning, *Nè maledicas*; Revile it not.

We know what Christ saith of their blasphemy, that said, *He casts out Devils through Beelzebub*; accounting the works of God to be the works of the Devil; and 'tis no less a blasphemy, to call the works of the Devil, the works of God. Let them take heed of both these practices.

3. A third *Caveat* is, when these two works meet in one: the work of God, and the work of the Devil: then separate the precious from the vile, discern and distinguish them. As, in a sinner there is both the work of God, and the work of the Devil; his sin, that's a work of the Devil, destroy that; but his nature that's a work of God, do good to that; hate his sin, but love his person. *Ama hominem, non errorem; ama quod Deus fecit, non quod Diabolus fecit.* *Augustine* tells us, our destroying of sins should not be like the destroying of the *Sodomites*; where persons were destroyed: but like the destroying of the *Ninivites*; where their sins were destroyed, but themselves saved. *Tantum de objecto.*

Come we,

Secondly, To the Opposition, which Christ makes against the works of the Devil,

'tis

'tis called a *destroying*. 'Tis a full word, of great vehemency, and intention. Christ came not only to abate the power of Satan, and to bring him under, as *Saul* did with *Agag*; or the *Israelites* did with the *Canaanites*: spared their lives, but subdued them only, and made them Tributaries. 'Tis charged on them as a sin; *Neither destroyed they the Heathen, as the LORD commanded them*; *Psal. cvi. 34.* No; sin and Satan are to be devoted to utter destruction. Not only restrain sin, but root it out, and destroy it. And that we may do this, we must beget in us a destroying affection. What's that? Hatred, that's the affection that works destruction. Wouldst thou destroy thy sin? then hate thy sin. Anger is not enough: that may consist with Love, and be overcome of Pity: but Hatred is an affection tending to destruction. And we must nourish in our hearts a double Hatred:

I. Is, *Odium inimicitiae*, the hatred of Enmity, that must be against the Devil, hate him with a perfect hatred.

II. Is, *Odium abominationis*, hatred of Abomination, that must be against sin, the work of the Devil. These two, the Hatred of Enmity against Satan, and the hatred of loathing, and antipathy against sin: that will make us imitate this work of Christ in destroying of sin. And this Christ doth in three degrees, till sin be utterly destroyed.

1. The first degree is, *Nè damnet*. He destroys the condemning power of sin, by purchasing the pardon of sin, and confers this upon us in our justification.

2. The second degree is, *Nè regnet*. He destroys the dominion, and reigning power of sin, by inspirations of his grace, thereby mortifying sin in our sanctification.

3. The third degree, *Nè sit*. He destroys the very being of sin; roots up the bitter root of sin, by his final, and finishing grace in our glorification.

Thus do thou;

1. Sue for the pardon of sin.

2. Strive against the power of sin.

3. Long for the final abolishing of sin.

The last part of the Text remains; that's,

Thirdly, The Design, and Intendment of this Work; *For this purpose.*

And here take notice of three things.

First, That it was his intention.

Secondly, It was his primary intention.

Thirdly, That it is his effectual, and resolute intention.

First, This destroying of sin, and Satan, and so the rescuing of us from both, 'twas his intention; he aimed at it, and intended it: He did not do it *obiter*, or by the by, as *David*, that took occasion to encounter *Goliath*, but he came to the Army upon another reason: Nor did he save us, as the good *Samaritan*, that travelled about his own business, and chanced on the wounded man, and took care of him. No, it was Christ's aim, and errand: *He came to seek, and to save that which was lost.* We may hit upon that which we never look for; but seeking is a work of intendment, and enquiry. Our deliverance was graciously intended. *For this cause was I born, to this end came I into the World.* He fore-saw our fall, and pitied our misery, and forecasts our recovery: His eternal thoughts of Grace and Mercy, were employed about us. 'Twas his intention.

Secondly, This work was his primary intention. The main end of his coming into the World, 'twas to destroy Satan, and to free us from his bondage, and captivity.

Other ends have been thought on by divers: some false, and erroneous; others nice, and curious; others true, but inferiour to this, to rescue us from the thalldom of Satan.

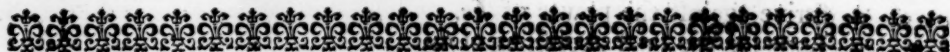
I. The end that *Origen* imagined, is false: That, *Christ came to save even the Devils themselves, and that they shall again be restored by Christ to their primitive happiness.* No, Satan, and all his works are destined to destruction. Hell, 'tis prepared for the Devil and his Angels. *He took not upon him the nature of Angels*, whether good or bad: and that nature, which was not assumed, shall not be redeemed.

2. That end, which some *School-men* imagine, is but nice, and curious; That, *Though man had not sinned, yet there was another end of Christ's Incarnation, the perfecti-*

Serm. IV. on of the Universe ; that Christ should have united to himself a Creature, so communicating himself in the noblest way to us ; which is *Hypostatical Union*. A groundless Conceit, without warrant of Scripture. What saith St. *Augustine* ? *Tolle morbos, tolle vulnera ? quid opus est Medico ?* If there were no sickness, what need were there of a Physician ? *He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

III. That end which others assign, 'tis inferiour, and secondary to this in the Text : which is, *Though not for the redemption of the evil, yet for the confirmation of the good Angels.* 'Tis a likely, and a seemly Truth ; the grace of Confirmation flowing from Christ, as well as the grace of Restitution. But yet the main end was Man's delivery from the power of Satan. The Angels themselves acknowledge our Title in Christ to be the principal ; they tell the Shepherds, *To you is born a Saviour this day, in the City of David, Luke ii. 11.* We are the *Heirs of Salvation* ; they are but *Ministring Spirits, to further our good, Hebr. i. 14.* The Church is the Spouse ; they are but *friends of the Bride, and Bridegroom.* We are the *chief Guests* at this heavenly Banquet ; the Angels are but *poollatores*, as *Luther* speaks, *sewers*, and *servitours* at this blessed Feast. That's the second, 'twas his primary Intention.

Thirdly, This destroying of Satan's works, 'tis his effectual, and real intention. Did he purpose it ? then surely he will accomplish it, and effectually perform it. He will make good the end, and purpose of his Incarnation, that shall not be frustrate. *His counsel shall stand, the thoughts of his heart shall be accomplished.* Satan shall fall, his works shall be destroyed, his captives shall be rescued. *The God of peace shall tread down Satan under our Feet.* The Devil, and all his Complices, (however they boast themselves in their success) they undertake a damned Cause, devoted to destruction. See with what assurance God seals up the promise of Christ's Incarnation, and this fruit of it to us : *Isai. ix. 7. The Zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this.*

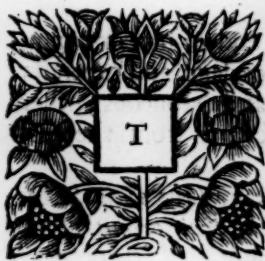


O N C H R I S T M A S - D A Y.

The Fourth Sermon.

I St. John iv. 10.

Herein is Love : not that we loved God ; but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins.



THE Apostle St. *John* had this Prerogative above all the Apostles, that he was called, *The Disciple whom Jesus loved* ; he was the choice Favourite among the Apostles, one that enjoyed the greatest portion of our Saviour's affection : and therefore, having received the greatest Love, he returns the most Love to Christ again. His heart was enflamed with the love of Christ. He breaths nothing almost but Love in this Epistle ; he stirs up himself, and all others, to abound in this most Christian grace of Love and Charity.

To enkindle in our hearts this holy affection (knowing, that Love is the greatest Load-stone to draw on Love) he presseth upon us, that eminent, and transcendent Example of God's love to us, and that in the greatest manifestation of it, the sending his Son into the World, to effect and accomplish the work of our Redemption.

And

And that's the purpose, and scope of the words, which I have read unto you. They contain the high Estimate, and Valuation, that St. John puts upon the great benefit, which we receive by our Saviour's Incarnation. And the Estimate he gives of it, arises from two Considerations.

First, From the Excellency of the Fountain, and Original, from which it springs; that's *The Love of God to us*.

Secondly, from the excellency of the Benefit, which flows from that Fountain; that's *The sending of Christ to accomplish our Salvation*.

First, The excellency of the Act; that's Love.

Secondly, The excellency of the Effect arising from that Love; that is Christ's Incarnation, and by it, the pardon, and propitiation of our sins.

First, Let us consider the Fountain, and Original, that's Love: and herein take notice,

First, Of the Instance; *Herein is Love*: And then,

Secondly, Of the amplifying, and illustration of it; that is in the words following, *Not that we loved him, but that he loved us*. And what is the strength, and importance of that expression, we shall hear hereafter. Come we,

First, To the Instance; *Herein is Love*. A Speech it is of great Emphasis, spoken by the Apostle with great strength of affection; and it carries with it a three-fold intimation.

I. It is a specification of that affection, or rather Attribute, in God, which most of all shined in this great Work of Christ's Incarnation. There were many other Attributes of God, that concurred in the sending of his Son to accomplish our Redemption: As,

1. His Wisdom, that was eminently seen in this great Mystery. So deep a Mystery it is, such unsearchable Wisdom, that it cannot be fathomed, or comprehended by Men, or Angels. St. Paul speaking of this great work of our Redemption, Ephes. i. 8. Tells us, that therein *God aboundeth towards us in all Wisdom, and Prudence*. It was the choice Master-piece of God's Wisdom, the contriving of this blessed work of our Redemption. In it was seen *πολυμία σοφίας*, the manifold Wisdom of God, Ephes. iii. 10.

2. His Power. In effecting of our Salvation, that Attribute was declared in a wonderful manner. The Apostle calls it, *The exceeding greatness of his Power*, Ephes. i. 19. The Prophet calls it, *The making bare his holy Arm of Salvation*, Isai. lii. 10. The Creation of the World was the work of his fingers, Psal. viii. 3. but the Redemption of the World was by the stretching-forth of his mighty Arm. Hence 'tis, that the Gospel is called, *the Power of God to Salvation*, Rom. i. 16.

3. His Righteousness. That attribute was declared in this great work. David, foretelling our Saviour's Incarnation, tells us, that then *Righteousness shall look down from Heaven*, Psal. lxxxv. 11. By Christ's Coming the righteousness of God is declared, saith St. Paul, Rom. iii. 25. Take it either way; either for his Holiness, and Justice in hating Iniquity; or for his Faithfulness in performing his Promise: All his Promises are *Yea, and Amen*, sealed up, and accomplished in his sending of Christ.

All these Attributes shined forth in this great work; but above all, his Love to mankind was most gloriously seen. There, saith St. Paul, *The Love, and Kindness of God our Saviour towards man appeared*, Tit. iii. 4. Those other acts of Wisdom and Power, and Righteousness, were all subservient to his great love to us. They were but *actus executivi*, employed to perform that great good, which his Love intended to us. 'Twas his Love, that employed his Wisdom, his Power, his Righteousness, set them on working for our good, and benefit. It was the imperative, and predominant Attribute, that set all the rest on working. Ask, Why his Wisdom, his Power, his Righteousness did effect so great a work for us? Here is the reason, because *He loved us*. But ask, Why *he loved us*? No reason can be given of that, but what Moses gives, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *He set his love upon us, because he loved us*. That was the spring, that set all the wheels a going.

These three, his Wisdom, his Power, his Righteousness, all these are seen in

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his sending of Christ; but the chiefest above all these, is his *love* and *charity* to us. II. *Herein is Love*; it hath a second Importance, it shews the real proof, and manifestation of his love. It was love testified in the reality of love. It intimates not only an act of love, but an effect of love, a fruit of love. *Ἐν τούτῳ, In this*, that he hath done for us, in this you may see true, real, effectual *love*. It was not a well-wishing *love* only, a kind affection rising in the heart, and there resting; but a *love*, that breaks forth into action, and evidence, and real performance. 'Twas a *love*, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, as St. John describes it. Should we come to that bold Expostulation, which they in *Malachy* make with God, when God protests his *love* to them, they presently say, *Wherein hast thou loved us?* Here is an answer to that prophane Question, *Wherein hath he loved us? Herein he hath loved us, in that he hath sent his Son to redeem us.* God's love to us is not a Benevolence only, but Beneficence also. *Thou art good, and doest good*, saith David, Psal. cxix. 68. An operative *love*, a *love* Incarnate. *He hath not left himself, or his love without witness*, as St. Paul speaks, *in that he hath done real good to us*, Acts xiv. 17.

III. *Herein is love*; it hath a third importance, it carries with it the most clear, and full demonstration of *love* to us. Other fruits of *love* he hath vouchsafed us, and we enjoy them daily; but none so evident, and undeniable proofs of his *love*, as the love of this Day, the sending of his Son to us. Our creation of us, that he first made us; our preservation, that still he maintains us; his patience towards us, that still he forbears us; these are acts of free Grace, and Favour: but all of them fall short of this, that *he gave his Son for us*; herein is the most signal *love*, in the highest transcendence. For outward blessings, though in their kind they are beneficial, and tokens of good will; yet, in their intendment, they are not such clear assurances of God's love to us. we know not whether God loves us, or hates us, by these outward Events. What saith Solomon? Ecclef. ix. 1. *No man knows love, or hatred, by all that is before them.* Thou canst not say, God gives me riches, and therefore he loves me; or he sends me poverty, therefore he hates me: these are but weak Conclusions: but this we may undoubtedly conclude, He hath given me his Son, and with him, whatsoever belongs to life, and godliness; and therefore he loves me. St. John makes this conclusion, *He hath loved us*; how doth that appear? *He hath washed us from our sins*, Rev. i. 5. *He hath loved me*, saith St. Paul. How proves he that? *He hath given himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20. *Herein God commends his love to us, that Christ died for us*, Rom. v. 8. This makes St. John set an *Ecce*, a mark of evidence, and admiration upon this fruit of Love: *Behold, what love the Father hath shewed us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* 1 Joh. iii. 1. That Mercy hath all the dimensions of *love*; herein is the height, and breadth, and depth of the Love of God; such a Love as is past knowledge, exceeding our comprehension, Eph. iii. 18.

We have seen the *Instance*: Come we,

Secondly, To the *Illustration* of the greatness, and excellency of this Love; and that is expressed in these words: *Not that we loved him, but that he loved us.* And we may resolve this Clause into a threefold sense; all which will set forth the greatness, and excellency of this love of God.

I. We may resolve these words into a preventing sense. We began not with him in this League of Love, but he began with us. That's one Excellency of his love; it was a forward, antecedent, preventing Love.

II. We may resolve it into a negative sense. We loved not him, and yet he loved us. That's another excellency of his Love; it was a free, and undeserved Love, no way due to us.

III. We may resolve it into a Comparative sense. Had we loved him, or do we love him; yet that's nothing in comparison of his love to us. *Herein is love, not that we loved him*: no great matter in that; our love to him, 'tis not worth the naming, in respect of the great love, which he bare to us: *Herein is love, that he loved us*, and so it shews the incomparable Excellency of his Love.

So that we have here three Degrees of Excellency in God's Love to us:

1. Is the Priority, and Precedency of his Love.

2. Is

2. Is the freeness and undeservedness of his Love.

3. Is the invaluable, and incomparable greatness of his Love, which he hath shewed unto us.

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I. His love, it was a preventing Love. We began not with him, nor made love towards him, but he began with us. And that's a great advantage, and commendation of Love, to have the precedence. The returns of Love, are nothing so much as the first proffers, and beginnings of Love. Our love to God, 'tis but the Eccho of God's love to us. He must first speak lovingly to us, ere our hearts can Eccho back any love to him; he must first say to us, *Seek thou my face*, before our hearts can say, *Thy face, LORD, will I seek*, Psal. xxvii. 8.

The Scripture insists upon this Excellency of God's Goodness, and Love: Psal. xxi. 3. *Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness*. David acknowledges this, Psal. lix. 10. *The God of my Mercy shall prevent me*. Preventing Mercy, that's the sweetest Mercy. This our Saviour inculcates to his Disciples, *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*; John xv. 16. *Audi, ingrate; ingrate audi*, saith St. Augustine: *Non vos elegistis me; sed ego elegi vos*. Unthankful wretches, listen to what Christ saith, you chose not to love me, but I chose to love you. And 'tis Saint Paul's challenge to all mankind, Rom. xi. 35. *Who hath first given unto him?* especially his Spiritual and Redeeming Mercies, they are all preventing Mercies. His thoughts of Love to us, were his eternal thoughts, and from everlasting. He loved us, before we loved him; nay, before we could love our selves, or had our being; we had a being in his Love, before we had a being in our selves. St. John gives us a good *Caveat*, that we mistake not our selves in this point; *We love him, because he loved us first*, Verse 19. Our love to him, 'tis at the second hand, and by reflection only: as the Looking-Glass returns the Schemes of the face, because the face first looks upon it.

These Spiritual Mercies, are like those merciful, and miraculous Cures which Christ wrought upon the Sabbath-day; he wrought them all unfought to, offered his help unasked; as to the man of *Bethesda*, *Wilt thou be made whole?* So the Woman bowed down by Satan, *Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity*, when she never thought of it: So the man with the withered hand, *Stretch forth thine hand*, and it was cured, when he never expected it: The man born blind: all these were cured in a gracious preventing way. Such was his love in sending of Christ. It was *ἡμεῖς, οὐκ ὁρῶμεν, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ βλεπόντες, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ δίδωσιν*, Chrysostome. We were not like *Hannah*, weeping and praying, and begging for a Son; but we may all say, as the *Shunamite* said to *Elisha*, *Did I desire a Son of my Lord?* Did we ever imagine, or hope for such a fruit of his Love? and then he graciously bestowed it on us.

That's the first Expression of this Clause; it was a preventing Love.

II. Take it in a Negative sense. We loved not him, and yet he loved us, and that adds to the greatness of his Love; it was a *free undue, and undeserved Love*. To love them which love us, is no such singular thing. Our Saviour counts that but the ordinary courtesie, and civility of the World; *Publicans and sinners will do the same*: but herein God commends his Love to us; that, when we were neither *amatores*, nor *amabiles*; neither loving, nor lovely; yet then he set his love upon us. And such we all were, our Saviour assures us of it, John v. 42. *I know you*, saith Christ, *that you have not the love of God in you*. Not love him; that's not all: *Minus dictum, plus intellectum*; we were far from loving him. The Scripture sets out, how we stood affected towards him. We were strangers to him: and small love is to be looked for at the hands of strangers; yea, estranged from him: we withdrew our selves from him, Psal. lviii. 3. We were strangers from the Womb; nay, worse than so, we were provokers of him: *Non invocantibus, sed provocantibus Deus sese offert*, saith Bernard. *God was provoked by us every day*, saith David. We lived in a state of enmity against him; Rom. v. multiplying acts of hostility: and 'twas the worst kind of hostility, it came out of Hatred. St. Paul tells us, we were *haters of God*, Rom. i. 30. Far we were from loving him: there was not the least spark of love in our hearts towards him; we were void of that love, which was more mercenary, and self-seeking, which we call *amor concupiscentiæ*; the loving of him

Serm. IV. him for our own sakes, that we might enjoy some good from him. Such unloving, and unlovely wretches we were, and yet he set his love upon us.

That's the second Expression.

III. We may resolve this speech into a Comparative sense. Had we loved him, or do we love him: yet that's nothing, in comparison of his love to us. *Herein is not love, that we loved him*: no great matter in that; it deserves no *Ecce*. *Behold! what love?* no *ἰσχύς* no note, or mark, to be set upon that: no print, or stamp of valuation; but, *Herein is love, that he loved us*.

See the great disproportion 'twixt our love to God, and God's love to us. Take notice of it in these five disproportions.

1. He is *summè amabilis*: in himself he is most lovely; so full of all the attractions, and motives to love, that 'tis no wonder, if we should set our love upon him. See how the Spouse in the *Canticles*, surveys all his excellencies, and beauties; and then cries out, *My beloved is the chiefest of ten thousands, he is most sweet; he is altogether lovely*, Cant. v. Meditate on his goodness, his holiness, his glory; and then tell me, canst thou place thy Love on any Object so amiable, as he is? Collect the perfections of all other Creatures, for which we love them; yet they are nothing, in compare, to that infinite beauty, which is in God. When one asked *Aristotle*, What Beauty was? he answered him, That *That was τὸ πρῶτον ἰσχυρῶς*, *A blind man's Question*. Surely, were the eyes of our Souls open, we should see that beauty in God, that would enforce love from us. 'Tis no hard matter to love him, that is so lovely. But then, for him to set his love upon us, who had nothing amiable, or lovely in us, deformed, polluted, odious; (such we are all were) for him to set his love upon such, deserves an *Ecce*. When we were in our blood, in a loathsome condition (so *Ezekiel* describes us) then he set his love upon us.

2. Did we love God, it had been no such great matter to be admired; it was our duty to love him. Necessity of duty abates of the excellency of any performance. Duty, 'tis a diminution to Desert. As one saith of the love of Parents, and Children; *We do not admire it, where we see it: but we cry out of those, and condemn them, in whom it is wanting; because the Law of Nature layes that Duty upon them*. Much more may we say of our loving of God: so many bonds of duty oblige us to it, that 'tis no marvel, if we should perform it; but 'tis a monstrous wickedness to be destitute of it. This makes *St. Paul* denounce a dreadful curse upon the neglecters of this duty: *If any man love not the LORD Jesus Christ, let him be accursed*. But God's love to us was no way due to us. *St. Paul* calls this Love a free gift, Rom. v. 15. *He loved us freely*, Hof. xiv. 4. The Creator is no ways obliged to his Creature.

3. Had we loved God, engaged our hearts to him in this affection: what great matter had it been? We should have gained honour, and dignity by it. For such poor Creatures; yea, for such vile wretches as we were, to enter into a League of love with God, and (as he said of *Abraham*) to be called *The friends of God*, it had been an high advancement, a great privilege, and prerogative. For men to be joyned in friendship with God, *Aristotle* accounts it an incongruity: 'tis an Axiom with him; *Inter Deum & homines non est amicitia*: He thought it too fellow-like, to say, God, and we, are in terms of friendship; yet, this honour we gain by loving of him. *I call you my friends*, saith Christ, *John* xv. 15. What saith *St. John*? *We have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 John i. 3. But then, on God's part, it had been a great condescension, to accept of our love, and to bestow his love upon us. Superiours stand not upon terms of love with their Inferiours: but expect awe, and reverence, and fear, and obedience. *Oderint, dum metuant*. 'Tis a great stooping, and condescension, for God to own our love, and to admit of it.

4. Had we loved him, yet, what great matter would that have been? Our love to him would have been beneficial to our selves, not to him. Our love to him adds nothing to his perfection; all the fruit of it accrues to our selves. *Non, ex te, ille major; sed tu, sine illo, minor*. Without our loving of him, we had been the losers: by loving him, we only are the gainers. As *St. Augustine* speak-

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ing of those words in St. Luke, of *being rich towards God, Estote divites Deo*, saith he: *Non eum facturi divitem, sed de illo futuri divites*. Our love doth not enrich him, but our selves. Indeed, when the Scripture exhorts us to love God, 'tis as much if it should say, *Love your selves, love your own souls*. St. Augustine asks the Question, Why in the Scripture we are commanded to love God, and our Neighbour; but we find no Commandment to love our selves? and he gives this Answer to the Question: That, *In the command of loving God, is necessarily implied a command of loving our selves. Fingi non potest major dilectio sui, quam dilectio Dei: He loves himself truly, that loves God cordially*. How can we better love our selves, than by loving him, that is the beatifical good, and can make us blessed: the knowing, and loving of whom, is eternal life?

5. Had we loved him, it had been no such great matter: nothing in compare of his Love to us. The mediocrity, and low degree of our love, at the best, makes it no way to be named with the Love of God. Our love, compared with his, 'tis as a drop to the Ocean: as a poor spark to the whole Element of fire: as an atom, or small dust, to the whole Globe of the Earth. Those everlasting flames of love, the holy Angels, their love is but chill, and cold, in respect of God's love to us.

St. Paul sets it forth in words of vehemency; *God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us*, Ephes. ii. 4. *God so loved the World: so, 'tis not a sic ficut; but a sic ut: not a comparing it with any other love, 'tis beyond all comparison*. Indeed, to make us understand it, he uses the similitude of the greatest love amongst men: as the love of a Friend to his Friend; or the love of Parents to their Children; or the love of an Husband to his Wife: but yet all fall short. Whereas he may say of our love to him, as he speaks of the People of Israel, Ezek. xvi. 30. *How weak is thine heart, saith the LORD God, How cold is thy love to me?*

We have done with the first Particular of the Text, the excellency of the Fountain, and Original, from whence the great mercy of this Day did spring; that's *The love of God*.

Come we now to the

Second, That's the Excellency of the benefit which flows from the Fountain: that's the sending of Christ to accomplish our Salvation.

And here are three great, and gracious fruits of love.

First, *Quod misit*, That he would send to us.

Secondly, *Quod filium*, That he sent his Son to us.

Thirdly, *Quod propitiationem*, That he sent him to this end, and purpose, to propitiate our sins for us.

First *Quod misit*, That he would send to us.

I. This act of sending to us, argues much love. It had been much for him to admit of our sending, and addressees to him. Consider upon what terms we stood with God, and we will confess it.

1. The Inferiour should send, and seek to the Superiour: Reason would have it so.

2. The Party offending, to the Party offended; good reason, he should seek, and sue, that hath done the offence.

3. The weaker should send to the stronger. He, that hath but a thousand, should send to him, that comes against him with two thousand, our Saviour tells us; that's both reason, and wisdom too. The servants of *Benhadad* thought it became them to seek, and supplicate to the King of *Israel*, that had got the better of them.

4. They that need Reconciliation, should seek to him that needs it not. As the men of *Tyre* and *Sidon* sued to *Herod* for reconciliation, because their Country was maintain'd by the King's Country, Acts xii. 20. they could not live without him. Leagues, and Covenants of peace, and love, they are grounded upon mutual necessity: when Parties are mutually useful to each others, that draws on to terms of amity and reconciliation. But God had no need of our love. He promises this, when he made his League, and Covenant with *Abraham*; he tells him then, *I am God All-sufficient*. He stands in no need of our love or amity: Yet he condescends from all these advantages, and graciously vouchsafes to send to us. 'Tis a Speech beyond all admiration, 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you.*

That's

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That's the first; *Misit, non admist tantum.*

II. *Misit, non permist tantum.* God sent him to us wittingly, and willingly. Our Saviour came not of himself only, but the Father sent him. Christ did not work our Salvation, as *Jonathan* got the Victory over the *Philistines*, of himself, without Commission, and Privity from his Father. No, St. Paul tells us, *He gave himself for us, according to the will of God the Father*, Gal. i. 11. It was a full Mission and Commission; He sent him: Yea, more than so, He sent him, and authorized him; *Him hath God the Father sealed*, Joh. vi. 27. laid his Command upon him to effect this Work. *This Commandment, saith Christ, have I received of my Father*, Joh. x. 18. God speaks to Christ, as *Jacob* to *Joseph*, *Come, I will send thee to thy Brethren* — Go, I pray thee; see how it fares with thy Brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 13.

III. He sent him:

1. *Non ut nuncium, sed ut donum*: Not as a Messenger only, but as a Gift also; that's the best kind of sending. He so sent him, as that he gave him to us. *Isaiah* expresses it in terms of Giving: *To us a Son is given: Dedit*, nay more than so, *tradidit*, he delivered him over to us, and for our behoof. Thus our Saviour expresses himself to the Woman of Samaria, Joh. iv. 10. *If thou knewest the Gift of God, and who it is that speaks unto thee.* That Gift of God, that singular choice gift, such is Christ become to us.

2. *Ut donum, non ut promissum donum, sed ut præstitum*: He was a gift, not only promised, but actually bestowed, and exhibited to us. We enjoy him whom the Prophets promised, the Patriarchs expected. We may say what *Philip* said to *Nathanael*, Joh. i. 45. *We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write.* Let us make *Nathanael's* acknowledgment; *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.*

That's the first Consideration, in that God sent to us.

But then,

Secondly, Here is an higher expression of his Love, in that he sent his Son to us. And here take notice,

I. Of the Dignity of the Person: and then,

II. Of the Dignation, or sending him to us.

I. Take notice of the Dignity of him that was sent. He was his Son, both when he sent him, and before he sent him, Which I note against that wicked Opinion of that Heretick *Socinus*, that denys Christ to be the Son of God from Eternity, or that he was the Son of God, when he came into the world; but, I wot not, what kind of Creature all his life-time, and at last was made the Son of God, after his Death, and Resurrection. Besides all other evidences to the contrary, even this form of speech shews the madnes of this blasphemy. We send not that which shall hereafter be, but that, which is already before we send it. That's the Dignity of his Person. Saint Paul tells us, *He was in the form of God, before he took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made Man for us*, Phil. ii. 6, 7.

II. See the Dignation. For so great a God to send any, though never so mean, to such wretches as we were, had been a dignation, and favour, more than we could expect, more than we can deserve at his hands; but to send his Son, his only Son, his beloved Son, his Son in whom his soul delighted, to send him to us, is a testimony of Love beyond all comprehension. To send his servants to us, as he did to the Jews, was a Mercy which he often charged upon them; *I sent my servants, the Prophets, rising early, and sending them.* The Apostle shews us our happiness above that of the Jews in this particular: Heb. i. 1. *God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake, in times past, unto the Fathers by the Prophets; but hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, parted with him, to bestow him upon us.* Saint Paul expresses that with an Emphasis. *He spared not his only Son, but gave him for us all.* How hardly did *Jacob* part with his *Benjamin*, though to ransom his Brother, and to provide for his Family? God spared not his only Son, but bestowed him upon us. Now we know, that thou hast loved us, in that thou hast not withheld thine only Son from us.

But then,

Thirdly, The next thing considerable is the purpose, and end of sending him, that is, *To be the propitiation for our sins.*

I. It

I. It was for sins. And that will satisfie that nice, and fond Question of the School-men, "Whether mankind did merit *Christ's Incarnation*, or any circumstances of it? And some of them spare not to affirm it, that *Abraham*, and other Holy Men, and especially the *Virgin Mary*, did merit, that *Christ* should come, and be *Incarnate* of them. No, *Saint Augustine* saith truly, *Christum de cælo in terram non merita nostra bona, sed peccata duxerunt*. We all did need it, but none did deserve it. He came to pardon our sins, not to reward our merits. We might rather cry out with *Peter*, *Lord, depart from us, for we are sinful men*: than say, *Lord, come, and visit us; for we deserve it at thy hands*.

So then, 'twas for the sake of sinners, that he sent him: and that's a great manifestation of Love.

1. It had been much, if *pro justis*, for just and good men, and for their benefit: *St. Paul* tells us, 'tis a Mercy, not to be matched among men. *Scarcely for a righteous man one would die: but God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*, *Rom. v. 7*. That God should shew such love to sinners; so holy a God, to whom sin is so odious; that he should shew mercy, and love; infinite holiness, and yet infinite love towards such, in whom there was infinite sin.

2. It was for Sinners, there is yet more in that; all sins are against him directly. To mediate for those that have offended another, is a kindness, and office of love, that may be found amongst men: but God is the Person wronged, our sins are all against him; his Law was broken, his Will disobeyed, his Name dishonoured: *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*: yet see his love; he sends to propitiate, and expiate our sins against himself.

3. 'Twas for Sinners. And in what condition, think ye, were they? let *St. Paul* tell us:

1. We were sinners of no strength.

2. He tells us, we were *Conclusi, shut up*, and imprisoned. *When we were without strength, Christ died for us*, *Rom. v. 8*. When we had no strength, either to help our selves, or annoy him. To send to Rebels in Arms, and to offer them Pardon, hath been found amongst men: but for Rebels subdued, and under the power of their Sovereign: Nay, *conclusi, shut up* (so *Saint Paul* terms us) we lay all at his Mercy, and then he sends unto us his Propitiation. You know what *Saul* said, when *David* had him in his power in the Cave, and might have dispatched him: *If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?* *1 Sam. xxiv. 19*. I, but God had us at this advantage, all disarmed, and imprisoned; and he sends us not a Message of Death, but of Peace and Pardon.

That's the first, it was for Sinners.

II. It was for the *Propitiating of our sins*. That was the great work, for which he came, as *Isaiah* speaks, *Chap. xxvii. 9. This is all the fruit, to take away sin*. That was his errand, on which he came: this he published and made known to the World. 'Twas the end of all his Miracles, to seal up this Truth to us. As he told them, when he cured the Palsie-man, *Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Take up thy Bed, and walk? But that ye may know, the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins*. 'Twas as easie for him to say the one, as the other: but it was more suitable to his Office, more behoveful for us, to make this Truth known to us, that he came to pardon and forgive sins.

And this is called here, *A propitiating of our sins*. It concerns us to understand it. And, that we may so do, let us take notice of three things:

1. What's the nature of this Propitiating?

2. What's the means of it?

3. What's the matter?

1. What is the Nature of it? To propitiate is to appease God's wrath and displeasure, justly taken against us, and to reduce us into grace, and favour again. It may seem somewhat strange, that he should love us, and yet be angry with us. Where so much love is, as we have heard, what needs propitiating, and pacifying, and reconciliation? Yes, he loved us, that he might love us (as before ye heard in the Original) he loved us, because he loved us; so here, in the effect,

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he loved us, that he might love us. *Ut pulchram faceret, fœdam amavit*; he loved us in our deformity, that he might put upon us a spiritual beauty. *Displicentes amari sumpsit, ut esset in nobis, unde placeremus*. He loved us, when we displeased him, that he might work in us that which pleaseth him. As it was love in God to Job's three friends, even when his wrath was kindled against them, that he calls for a Sacrifice of them, that might appease him, *Job* xlii. 8. His love of Benevolence wrought in him this desire of Complacency; his love first pitied us, that so he might make us such, as he might delight in us. In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed us, *Isaiah* lxi. 9. That's the nature of this propitiating love, and mercy to us.

2. What is the Means? That is implied in this act of Propitiation; and that's a further degree of love. He did it by the means of making a full satisfaction to the justice of God for us. That's properly to propitiate; not, as *Socinus* wickedly affirms, to mediate only, and intreat for pardon. No, Christ rendered a full Compensation to God, for all our sins, and so appeased him. Still we see the Scripture calls for a Ransom, a Price, a Recompense, *Exod.* xxx. There God exacts a Ransom for our souls. So *Job* xxxiii. 24. *Elihu* shews how we are saved: God saith, *Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a Ransom*. Christ is not only an Intercessour, but a Propitiator, and Redeemer: and he hath done away our sins, not by a free dispensation, but by a full, and just compensation. But then,

3. What's the Matter of our Propitiation? the Price of our Ransom? That's the highest improvement of Love. That's expressed in the Text, He is our Propitiation: not only our Propitiator, but our Propitiation. 'Tis a great deal more to be our Propitiation, than to be our Propitiator. As *Saint Bernard* on those words of *David*, *Thou art my hope*, saith, *Amplius quid, & sublimius sonat*. 'Tis more to say, *Thou art my hope*; than to say, *I hope for something from thee*. He hoped not only in him, but for him. *Nihil, Domine, præter te ipsum*. So, 'tis much more, that Christ is our Propitiation, than our Propitiator. He is not only our Saviour, but he is become our Salvation, as *David* speaks. He is not only our Redeemer, but our Ransom. *He gave himself a ransom for all*, *1 Tim.* ii. 6. *He laid down his life for us. He made his soul an offering for sin*, *Isai.* liii. 10. *Him God hath set forth to be a Propitiation by his blood*, *Rom.* iii. 25. I, 'tis the Blood, that makes the Atonement for our souls, *Levit.* xvii. 11. *He was the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world*. He was not only the Priest, but the Sacrifice also. He not only acted for us, but suffered for us. *He loved us, and gave himself for us*, *Gal.* ii. 20. *He redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us*, *Gal.* iii. 13. What *Paul* saith of his love to the *Corinthians*, may in a far higher degree be spoken by Christ: *I will gladly spend, and be spent for you*. He spent his pains: yea, he spent his blood for us. He was the Propitiator: yea, more than so, the Price, and Propitiation for our sins.

To close up all: We have seen this great Love of God to us; what effect should this love of God work in us? Sure, it ought to produce a three-fold effect.

First, *Admiration*.

Secondly, *Retribution*. And then,

Thirdly, *Imitation*.

First, It should teach us to fasten our *Admiration* on this great love of God, to work our selves to an holy wonderment, that God should bestow such love upon us. Adore this great goodness of God, in sending his Son to us. The Angels of Heaven, they wonder at this Love, and adore him for it, though he came not for their sakes, but for ours only. God calls upon the Angels for this adoration; when he brings in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, *Heb.* i. 9. How should our hearts be raised up into an holy rapture of admiration, that God should so love us? It should make us cry out with the Psalmist, *LORD, what is man, that thou shouldest set thy love upon him? or the Son of man, that thou shouldest thus regard him?* And again, *Oh! how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up, and prepared for us?* We may invert the speech of the Jews to our Saviour: *How is it, that thou, being a Man, makest thy self God?* *John* x. 33.

Let

Let us say with wonder, and admiration, at this our Saviour's condescension; *Serm. IV.*
How is it, that thou, being God, wilt vouchsafe to make thyself Man? When Christ shed
 tears for Lazarus, the People said presently, *Behold, how he loved him!* Christ hath not
 shed tears only for us (the tears of his Infancy and Nativity) but he hath shed his
 blood for us. Oh! let our souls say, *Behold, how he hath loved us!*

That's the first effect, an holy Admiration.

Secondly, This great love of God to us calls for another effect; that's an holy *Re-*
tribution of love to him again. He hath prevented us with Love; let us make the
 returns of love to him again. *Si pigri eramus ad amandum, non simus pigri ad redaman-*
dum, saith Bernard. He began with us in love, let us study to answer his love again.
To whom much is forgiven, saith Christ, he will love much. Retribution will cast about,
 and be consultive how to testify our love again. Say with David, *Quid retribuam?*
What shall I render unto the LORD, for all his benefits bestowed upon me? Psal. cxvi. 12.
 Say to thy soul, as *Elisba* speaks in another Case, *He hath done all this for me, what*
shall I do for him again? Provoke thy self, inflame thine heart with the Love of him,
 who hath so loved thee. Say, and say it affectionately, what David said to him,
Psal. xviii. 1. I will love thee, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer.

Thirdly, This love of God requires in us an holy *Imitation.* *Walk in love, saith*
St. Paul, as Christ loved us, Ephes. v. 2. Make him the pattern of our Imitation. *We*
ought to walk, saith St. John, (i. 2. 6.) even as he hath walked. How is that, saith *St. Au-*
gustine? Not as he walked upon the Sea; but as he walked in love, and charity, and
 doing of good; to imitate his love to us, in loving our Brethren. *Non permittor tan-*
tummodo imitari, sed jubeor imitari: August. If God so loved us, we ought to love one
 another. 'Tis the use *St. John* makes of the Doctrine of my Text, in the next Verse fol-
 lowing. The Inference, one would think, would be more proper, and kindly; *If*
God so loved us, we ought to love him. But God sets over our love, due to him, in
 the effects of it, to our Brethren. He esteems it, as done to himself, what is
 done to them. Indeed, the honour of our Love, that refers to him: but the
 fruits, and comforts of Love, they must be exhited to his Servants, and Chil-
 dren. The honour of our love, that's to be referred to God; that's the *fat of*
the Sacrifice, which must be burnt upon the Altar, and offered up to God; but
 the helpfulness of our Love, that's the *flesh of the Sacrifice*, that must be com-
 municated to our Brethren. As the Servants of the King of *Ammon* said to their
 King, when David sent to him, to shew kindness to him, *2 Sam. x. 3. Think-*
est thou, that David doth honour thy Father, that he hath sent Comforters unto thee?
 So 'tis with us: Let thy love be comfortable to thy Brethren, and it shall be
 honourable unto God thy Father. He takes it as done to himself. O! how
 happy will it be, for to hear that speech of Christ spoken unto thee; *In that you*
have done it to my Brethren, you have done it unto me.

In particular, imitate this love of God, in all the Prints and Characters of Love
 expressed in my Text.

I. The reality of thy Love, *Ἐν τέλει.* Shew thy Love by the fruits of Love,
 as *St. John* speaks, *Let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.*
1 Joh. iii. 18. Not like the Love Saint *James* speaks of, well-wishing only; *Be warm,*
and be clothed: good words, but no true testimonies of love; good wishes, but
 not a morsel of Bread to feed them, not a rag to cloath them. What saith *St. John?*
We ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren: But if we see our Brother hath
need, and shut up our bowels of compassion against him, how dwells the love of God in us?
1 Joh. iii. 16.

II. We must imitate this Love of God, in the Preventions of Love, in *shewing*
of love, going one before another. To begin with our brethren in love, not to stay
 till they begin with us. The first invitations of love, the first reconciliations of
 love, they are the choicest testimonies of our love. We look, that *Jacob* should
 send us a present to purchase Peace, he must bow down seven times before us,
 ere we will embrace him.

III. We must imitate this love of God in the Condescensions of his love, to our
 Inferiours, (such were we, when God loved us) to our Enemies, those that

Serm. V. stand in need of our love, not we of theirs; such was the love of God to us, such should be our love to others.

IV. We must imitate this love of God, in that great and main Effect of his love to our souls, in freeing them from sin. Herein was his love seen; he came to propitiate our sins. We cannot attain to that work for expiation of our brethrens sins; but yet preventions of sin, or reclaiming from sin, exhorting, perswading, praying for them, to keep them from sin, 'tis a great fruit of love. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt in any wise reprove him, and not suffer sin upon him.* Levit, xix. 17.

Love to the Soul of thy Brother, 'tis the best love; and to keep him from sin, or to free him of sin, 'tis the best love to his Soul. What saith our Saviour? *If thy brother offend, tell him of it; and, if he repent, thou hast gained thy brother.* This is *Utilis amicitia*, the gainfullest love, to save him from sin. 'Tis St. James his conclusion of his Epistle, and it shall be mine; *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one converteth him, let him know, that he which converteth the Sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*



ON CHRISTMAS-DAY.

The Fifth Sermon.

MATTH. III. 7, 8, 9.

7. *But, when he saw many of the Pharisees, and Sadduces come to his Baptism, he said unto them, O generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*
8. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*
9. *And think not to say within your selves, We have Abraham to our Father: For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up Children unto Abraham.*



S this Sacred Anniversary of our Saviour's Nativity, so likewise this Chapter represents unto us *Diluculum Evangelii*, the first dawning and Day-break of the Gospel. Before the Sun of Righteousness himself arises, here is a Day-Star appears in the Firmament of the Church, that tells us, *The Night is past, the Day is at hand; that it is time to lay aside the deeds of darkness, and to set our selves to the works of light.* And this Day-Star is *John the Baptist*. In himself a great president, and pattern of Mortification; and, by his Ministry, a Preacher of Repentance. And the light of that Doctrine, 'tis like the light of the Day-Star, fore-running, and ushering in the Sun of Righteousness. Repentance, 'tis the Harbinger of the Gospel; it fits, and prepares men for the receiving of Christ.

And, though the preaching of this Duty may seem to refer more to the Fast, than to the other Solemnity (Fasting-days being the Festivals of Repentance) yet these sower Herbs of Penitential sorrow will quicken our appetite, to feed more favourly

favourily on this Lamb of God. However a Sermon of Repentance cannot be im- Serm. V.
proper for the Day ; it being the main End, and Errand, for which Christ came
into the World. *He came to call sinners to repentance.* And it was his first Theme
he treated upon. *Mat. iv. 17. Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent.* Both this
Coming, and this Preaching of Repentance hath the like success. Satan startles
at both. When he was born, *Herod* was troubled at it. It was *Magnus ille Hero-*
des, saith *Theodorët* ; *The Devil* was that great Herod, that was perplexed at it. And
he can as little endure this Doctrine of Repentance. *Chrysostom* saith, *The Devil*
never hears a Sermon preached of Repentance, but he trembles at it.

Besides, in these days of danger, and bloody dissensions, 'twill be useful to joyn
the Commemoration of our Saviour's Nativity with the penitent Deprecations of
our present miseries. *Ecce ! Virgo concipiet*, was the blessed sign, and token of de-
liverance God gave to his People from their cruel enemies.

The Macedonians, being invaded by the *Illyrian* Armies, *Regem infantem, in cu-*
nis productum, antè aciem collocabant. They brought their new-born King in his
Cradle, and placed him in the head of their Armies. That proved auspicious, and
they vanquished their Enemies. Let us now present this Holy Babe Jesus to our
angry God, whose Judgments are now up in Arms against us : And, I trust, he
will suffer himself to be overcome by us. Let us place our new-born Saviour 'twixt
us, and our enemies. *In hoc vincemus.* By the Mystery of his Incarnation, and Holy
Nativity, let us pray for deliverance.

And withal, *St. Cyprian's* saying will here hold good too, *Qui semel pro nobis,*
semper in nobis ; He, that was this day born for us, must be again conceived, and
born in us. And the pangs of Repentance, they are *nixus parturientis*, the
Throws of this holy Birth. When we have felt the sorrows, the Birth of the Man-
child will bring us Joy. And that will be the sweetest joy : Not only *Gaudium*
post dolorem, Joy after sorrow ; *sed gaudium ex dolore*, Joy arising out of sorrow,
which is the truest joy.

To work this blessed work, was the drift of *John Baptist's* preaching. And this
Doctrine of his was entertained by many, with great readiness, and alacrity. The
People, from all parts, resorted unto him ; and God gave great testimony to the
Word of his Grace, by the conversion of many.

Amongst others, here offer themselves unexpected Auditours, and Disciples,
whom *John* little looked for, Men, that had disdained to be put to School by any,
the great Rabbies of the Time ; the Pharisees ; and Sadduces : these repair to *St.*
John, and their coming is for a good, and ghostly purpose, of pure zeal to be *Bap-*
tized of him.

And then the Words, that I have read unto you, report the welcome, that *St.*
John gives to these great Masters of *Israel*, that will do him the favour to turn
Disciples to him.

And the entertainment is far otherwise than they expected.

First, He begins with a sharp Reprehension, *O generation of Vipers ! who hath*
forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come ?

Secondly, He proceeds to a serious, and necessary Injunction ; *Bring forth fruits*
meet for Repentance.

Thirdly, He enforces that with a seasonable Caveat, and Prevention ; *And think*
not to say within your selves, We have Abraham to our Father : for I say unto you,
that God is able of these stones, to raise up Children unto Abraham.

First, For the Reprehension ; 'tis sharp, and hath a double edge.

I. Here is a quick, and cutting Compellation ; *O generation of Vipers !*

II. Here is a sharp, and severe expostulation ; *Who hath warned you to flee from*
the wrath to come ?

We will pass by the Compellation, though good use may be made of it. *Ex Vi-*
pera Theriacum ; *Vipers*, saith *Pliny*, may be dressed into a sovereign Medicine.

We will begin with the Expostulation ; *Who hath forewarned you to flee from the*
wrath to come ? and of it we will take a double view.

First, With reference to these *Pharisees*, and *Sadduces* ; as it carries with it an
edge, and acrimony of reproof to them.

Secondly,

Serm. V. Secondly, Then absolutely in it self; and so we will consider the several Truths contained in it.

First, Look upon it as it respects, and reproves these *Pharisees*, and *Sadduces*; and then the Emphasis, and force of it will admit these five Apprehensions.

I. 'Tis *Vox admirantis*; 'tis a Speech of wonderment and admiration. 'Tis strange to see these men repair to *John Baptist*, to seek to him for help, and direction. These two, amongst others, were two famous Sects among the *Jews*. That degenerating Church, at this Time, swarmed with such Sectaries. As such kind of Creatures breed of putrefaction; the Churches corruption, 'tis their generation.

1. The *Sadduces*, they were flat Atheists: what makes them thus forward? They, that believed neither Heaven, nor Hell, held all Religion a meer Policy, to keep people in awe: Who hath perswaded them, that *there is wrath to come*? and warned them to avoid it?

2. The *Pharisees*, they were highly conceited of their own Sanctity, accounted themselves out of the reach of any reproof: exact men beyond all exception. If God had any Saints upon Earth, they were the men. Heaven was their due, they had abundantly deserved it. 'Tis strange they should pretend need of *St. John's Baptism*. Who hath made them fear the danger of Hell, and advised them to escape it?

3. Take them both together. So they were notorious Dissemblers, settled upon the Lees, and Dregs of Hypocrisie; remorseless Hypocrites, void of all Conscience: 'tis a wonder to see them make towards Religion, to look after Salvation.

Observe it, of all sorts of Sinners, these three,

1. The prophane *Atheist*, that counts all Religion a meer Mockery;
2. The proud *Pharisee*, that boasts of his Sanctity;
3. The pretending false-hearted *Hypocrite*: They are the most hopeless sinners: the saving of such is most unlikely, and improbable. He that means to go to Heaven, must,

1. Believe that there is such a State.

2. Confess, and acknowledge he stands in need of it.

3. Seriously set himself to the attaining of it. Now,

1. The *Sadduce*, and those of his Tribe, they fail in the first. Heaven, and Hell are both *μυθολογια*, Fables to them, meer Dreams, and Fictions.

2. The *Pharisee*, and such holy ones as he, they fail in the second. They are already possess'd of Heaven; no need of Conversion to entitle them to it. And then,

3. The *Hypocrite*, he fails in the third. If, besides some demure, out-side performances, you hold Heaven at an high price, 'tis no bargain for him; he will never deal for it. Publicans, and Harlots, and the worst of sinners, get the start of him, and go to Heaven before him, *Matth. xxi. 31*. That's the first Apprehension, 'tis *Vox admirantis*.

II. *Who hath forewarned you?* 'Tis *Vox Repellentis*; a Speech of repulse, and rejection. As if he should say, "I am not sent to such as you are, hardened, hypocritical, malicious Sinners: the glad tidings of the Gospel belong not unto you; Hell, and *the Wrath to come*, is your deserved portion. Not that this was a peremptory rejection, utterly excluding them from hope of Heaven; it did not betoken an impossibility; but sets forth the great difficulty of their finding Mercy.

The Grace of the Gospel, 'tis not alike open to all. Some sort of Sinners may be sooner admitted; others must be staved off, and the hardness of Salvation must be prest upon them. Thus *St. Peter* affrights prophane men; *If the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear*? He shuts Heavens gates against them.

This must be the wisdom of our dispensation, not to assure Pardon hand over head, to admit of all comers upon equal Terms. *On some have compassion*, saith *St. Jude*; *others save with Fear*. Seest thou a poor, contrite, broken-hearted Sinner coming towards Christ? O run, and meet him, set open Heaven to him, remove all impediments, assure him of Pardon. But to obdurate Sinners deny admission, clog the gaining of Heaven with difficulties, repel, and reject them. Thus the Prophet *Jeremy* answered the Hypocritical, rebellious *Jews*, that came to consult with him, *Whether they*

they should go? Chap. xv. 2. *Whither shall ye go? such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for famine, to famine; and such as are for captivity, to captivity.* Thus Christ flashes Hell-fire into the faces of the Pharisees, makes it almost impossible for such to be saved, *Matth. xxiii. 33. Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?* Of some Sinners Christ saith, *How hardly shall such enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?* *Mat. xix. 24.* 'Tis not an easie thing for any man to be saved. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* 'Tis a narrow passage at the best; but to some 'tis as narrow as a Needle's eye. *Easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, than for such to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Such repulses, and difficulties are useful: It will shame them, it will affright them, it will arouse them, make them look about them, if they mean to be saved.

III. *Who hath forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come?* 'Tis *Vox Irridentis*. There is an holy Sarcaſm in the Speech. "What? you seek to me to escape damnation! You have ways of your own, that will serve well enough. They were the great Masters in *Israel*, exact in all Rites, and Customs; not a sin, but they knew a falve for it: This Trespass will be purged by such a Ceremony; they had Expiations for all sorts of Transgressions. *Pharisees*, had they been at Market, and there cheated, and cozened, 'twas but calling for water, and washing their hands, and they were cleansed presently. What saith Saint *John*? Do ye now see the vanity of your perfunctory Devotions? These Rabbies they were utterly to seek how to reconcile themselves to God, to get peace into their Consciences, and escape damnation.

Nicodemus, he was a Master in *Israel*; not a Rite in *Moses* Law, but he could tell the use of it. But, when Christ tells him of Regeneration, he knows not what it means: *How can a man be born again?* Cunning expert men in Rites, and Sacrifices; but extream Ignorant of Spiritual Duties. Question with a *Pharisee*, and he will tell you how many Words, and Letters there are in the Bible; as many Precepts, as there be Days in the year, or Bones in a man's body: but question him in point of Conscience, and ye pose him presently. Thus, this new *Elias* imitates the old: in an holy derision he sent *Ahab* and his Prophets to *Baal*; *Call upon him, see whether Baal can send you your fire or water from heaven, or give relief to you.*

IV. *Who hath forewarned you?* 'Tis *Vox Exprobrantis*. 'Tis an upbraiding Speech, casting in their teeth their former impenitency. You that have long despised the Grace of God, slighted, and set at naught so many warnings, mocked Gods Ministers, and Messengers, What, are you now advised, after such long obstinacy?

Observe it; *Such as have been despisers of the Grace of God, lived in a constant contempt of the means of Salvation, God will reckon with such for all their contempts, upbraid, and lay to their charge their former obstinacy.* Their slighting of *John*, they shall be sure to hear of it, *Matth. xxi. 32. John came to you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not.*

Here is the advantage of timely Conversion, to answer God's first call, to meet him at his early risings, and sendings; God mingles no reproaches, or exprobrations. There hath been no means of Grace spilt, or lost upon them. The Father saith, *Go into my Vineyard*; and they go presently.

St. *Paul* took comfort in the season of his Conversion, that it was not dilatory. *I was not disobedient to the heavenly Vision, Act. xxvi. 19.* Those that went early, at the first hour, into the Vineyard, had no checks given them; but they that stood out till the eleventh hour (like those Winds in *Seneca*, that never rise till towards the evening, they are called *Venti somnicalosi*, lazy and drowsie Winds) how doth he reprove them? *Why stand ye all the day idle?* waste away such precious opportunities of Salvation? Here is the fruit of putting off God, when he offers his grace to thee: if ever thou repentest, it will be Gall, and Wormwood, to thee, it will imbitter thy Conversion; thine heart will be wo, that thou hast so long neglected him. If thou never repentest, it will be as the Poison of Asps, and as the Gall of Dragons in thy condemnation.

V. *Who hath forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come?* 'Tis *Vox Informantis*;

Serm. V. a Speech of Direction, and needful Information. It instructs them what to think of St. *John*, and his Baptism; not to come to it, as to some new Rite, or Ceremony only; no, his business is to save men from Hell, to teach them the way to escape damnation.

Religion, 'tis a far other thing, than most men esteem it. A slight, perfunctory performing of a few Rites, serve God on Sundays, and sit before the Preacher, and give him the hearing, and have a few cold, heartless wishes to God-ward; here is the upshot of many mens Devotions. No, this Speech assures us, Religion is of far greater concernment. 'Tis not to dispatch thy customary Rites, and to put off God with some slight observances: but this must be thy aim, how to escape damnation, how to save thy poor soul, how to get into God's favour, and to work out thy salvation. This Thought deeply settled, it will quicken our care, awaken our intention, enflame our Devotion: *I go to that Word, that may lead me out of Hell, and guide me to Heaven, that may teach me to escape the wrath to come.*

And this lets us into the second Consideration of the Words: And so we may, Secondly, Look upon them absolutely in themselves: and then we may resolve these Words into three Assertions.

I. There is *Ira ventura*. Be assured of this, There is *Wrath to come*.

II. *Hæc Ira fugienda est*. This *Wrath to come* is to be fled from.

III. *Via fugæ monstranda*. We must be shewed, and warned how to flee from it.

I. There is *Ira ventura*. And that's a Proposition pregnant; it hath three Particulars.

1. There is *Ira*, there is Wrath in store for impenitent Sinners. 'Tis a necessary Truth, what ever men think of it. Indeed some Heathen Philosophers thought it an unseemly Attribute to ascribe to God, that he should be wrathful, and angry. And some Hereticks conceived the God of the New-Testament void of all Anger. They imagined two Gods; the God of the Old-Testament, he was *Deus Justus*, a Deity severe and revengeful: but the God of the New-Testament, he was *Deus Bonus*, the Good God, made of all Mercy: they would have no anger in him. No, our Faith ascribes both to him. St. *John* tells us of *Ira Agni*. The *Lamb of God*, born as this day, is not so meek, and merciful, but he knows how to be angry.

1. Because he is God, he must have anger in him. Take away rewards, and punishments, and you take away his Providence, by which he governs the World. God proclaims this Attribute, among his Titles of Honour, *Nab. i. 2. God is Jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious, he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

2. Because he is a Just God, therefore he must be angry. *Ira*, 'tis *telum Justitiæ*. His wrath, 'tis the Weapon of his Justice. He is armed with anger to repay his Enemies. Nay, even,

3. Because he is a Good God, therefore he must be angry. Goodness abhors Wickedness. *Qui bonos diligit, & malos odit*, saith *Lactantius*. A Sympathy with goodness breeds an Antipathy to Wickedness. *With the pure thou wilt be pure; and with the froward he will shew himself froward*, *Psal. xviii. 26.*

'Tis the High-way to Atheism and Profaneness, to fancy to our selves a God made all of Mercy; that cannot conceive wrath, and displeasure. *David* wondred, and trembled at it; *Who knows the power of thy wrath?* *Psal. xc. 11.* Let us nourish this thought in our heart, *Surely our God is a consuming Fire*. That's the first Particular; there is *Ira*. But,

2. It is *Ira ventura*. This affords us two other. *Ventura*, 'tis in the Future. And *Aristotle* tells us, there is a double power in the Future; 'tis τὸ μέλλον, and τὸ ἰσχυμένον.

1. This *Ira ventura*, 'tis τὸ μέλλον. 'Tis yet to come. The main anger of God. As yet, the present time, 'tis the time of God's Patience. As yet *Patientia*, 'tis *Vagina Justitiæ*. His anger, 'tis yet sheathed up in his patience. Not but God sends some Tokens of his anger upon the World at present; and this woful Kingdom, 'tis a spectacle of it. The World would grow to open Atheism, believe there is no God, because we feel him not. The Grand Assizes be at the last day: yet he keeps his Petty-Sessions in this World; but the day of his fierce anger is yet to come. And this

this *Ira ventura* is that we should most tremble at. We must be sensible of temporal Judgments, that God hath called for a Sword into the Land, hissed for a Swarm of Enemies to fall upon us. But the main Motive to Fear, and Repentance, 'tis the Anger to come. *Knowing the terrour of that day, we perswade men.* However it fares with thee for present Judgment, have thy Thoughts fixed upon the last great day; How shall I escape then? Temporal Judgments may fall upon good, and bad; a *righteous man may perish here in his righteousness.* God oftentimes punishes a Nation pell-mell; sweeps away his own, as well as the wicked; but the *Wrath to come*, 'tis the Reprobates portion: Fear that most, that is the sorest sign of his displeasure.

2. 'Tis *Ira ventura* in a *second* sense, 'tis τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον, 'tis yet to come; but it shall surely come. It may be delayed; but 'tis decreed. Forbearance, 'tis no forgiveness. This day, 'tis fixed in God's purpose; *He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the World,* Acts xvii. 31.

The Threatnings of the last day, they are not like the threatnings of Temporal Judgments. God often revokes those Comminations. He may threaten a Judgment, and repent of it: but he hath sealed up the day of Judgment with an Oath, *Rom. xiv. 11.* The Jews observe that bare Threatnings may be recalled; but, if God swears to them, they become irrevocable. *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent.*

Men hope of their future estate by their present condition. If they prosper here, they conclude they shall fare well hereafter: Or, contrary, if they be afflicted here, Oh! then they have had their Hell in this World, they look for Heaven hereafter. These are fallible Conjectures. Judge of thy self as the last Judgment shall find thee, and leave thee.

That's the first Assertion, there is *Ira ventura.* The *second* Assertion is,

II. *Hæc Ira fugienda est.* We must bethink our selves how to flee from it. Take it in these Particulars:

1. *Non sustinenda;* never think of undergoing of it: 'tis unsupportable. For other miscarriages, *aut fugiendum, aut ferendum,* either avoid them, or be content to endure them. But, for this *wrath to come*, there will be neither Fortitude to resist it (*Æternis ignibus concremari, nec erit, nec vocabitur Fortitudo.* Aug. *contra Parmenianum*) nor Cunning to avoid it, nor Patience to endure it. There is no grappling with the anger of God. *Will you provoke the LORD to anger, are you stronger than he?* 1 Cor. x. 22. There is no proportion of Strength to bear it, or Patience to endure it. If the Burden be light, or thy Strength great, or thy Patience large, something may be done: O! but the *wrath to come*, 'tis heavy, *κατὰ κράτος, κατὰ δύναμιν*, as St. Paul speaks. Thy Strength then will be like the Strength of a man upon the Rack; able to feel thy pain, but not to endure it. There will be extreme impatience in extreme torments.

2. It must be *fled from*: Then 'tis *Evitabilis.* As yet it is avoidable; there is possibility of escaping: if we can hit on the right way, and have grace to use it, we may escape damnation.

1. *In possibilitate Naturæ.* 'Tis God's gracious dealing with Mankind, to give a respite 'twixt our sin, and our punishment. *Peccatoribus inducias dat credendi,* saith the Father. He gives us time to look about us, and to provide for our Souls. And this Favour, 'tis grounded upon the benefit of this day. Christ's assuming of our Nature, makes our Nature capable of Salvation. *Quod non est assumptum, non est redemptum.* God's dealing with the Angels was more peremptory, and severe. Their first Fall undid them; no Reprieve granted to them. But our estate, though miserable, yet upon better terms: The *Wrath* due to our sins, is as yet avoidable.

2. *In possibilitate Vitæ.* As long as he suffers us to live, there may be some hope: *De nemine desperandum, quem patientia Divina sinit vivere,* saith St. Augustine. As long as thou art on this side Hell, 'tis possible thou mayest escape it.

3. *In possibilitate Gratiæ.* As long as the day of Grace shines upon thee. These two, the Day of Life, and the Day of Grace (like the Natural and Artificial day)

Serm. V. the lasting of these two days make the escape possible. 'Tis evitable; as yet God is intreatable, and sin pardonable, and Hell-Fire avoidable.

3. 'Tis *Evitanda per fugam*. The way to escape it, is to *flee from it*. And fleeing, we know, 'tis a motion of Nature, that carries us away from danger, that begets us. And, if it be such, as will do us good, it will be qualified with these Conditions.

1. It must be a timely Motion. Flight, 'tis no lingerer; in case of mischief approaching, delay is dangerous. If we linger, and loyter, a sudden surprizal may prevent us. Did we know when this day would come, we might take time accordingly; but it is *hid from our eyes*.

The Jews have a Rule, that *If a man vows any service to God before he dies, he must do it presently; because he may die presently*. The Wings of the morning are fittest for flight. As it was with *Lot's flight out of Sodom*, 'twas before day; the Sun was but rising, when he entred into *Zoar*, *Gen. xix. 23*. And it cost his Sons dear for loytering in *Sodom*. When God rains fire, and brimstone, he rains snares withal to catch, and hold us: there will be no escaping, *Psal. ix. 6*. First a showre of snares to detain us; then a storm of brimstone, to consume and destroy us.

2. Flight, 'tis a swift motion, full of speed, and celerity. As, if we delay, this wrath may surprize us; so, if we be slow-paced, it may overtake us. We must be like those, that pass over the washes, they are all upon the spur; lest the Tide come upon them. This flight from the danger of Hell, it must be *volatus Aquilæ*; not *saltus Cicadæ*. See St. Paul's pace, *Gal. ii. 2*, *ἐμῶς ὁρῶμεν*. *Phil. iii. I follow after, I reach forth, and press forward*. What haste made the Syrians when they fled from a supposed danger? They flung off their Garments in the way, parted will all incumbrances. *Prepare thy Chariot*, saith *Elijah*, *that the rain stay thee not*. *Rev. vi. 8*. there Death and Hell are described, coming in full speed, mounted on Horseback: then ask *Jeremy's Question*, *Chap. xii. 5*. *Canst thou out-run or escape these Horse-men?*

3. Flight is a motion of length, and distance, it sets us far away from the thing we flee from. *Stay not in the Plain*, said the Angel to *Lot*, but *flee to the Mountains*. *Kivduu*, saith, *Aristotle*, 'tis *πολεμὸν ἀναστρέφει*. While we are near a mischief, we are in danger of it. *Nemo diu tutus, periculo proximus*. If we will needs be removing, yet Satan will persuade us not to go far. As *Thrasimundus the Arrian*, when he turned out the Orthodox Bishops, he sent them not far from their Sees; that the nearness of their places might allure them to return upon his wicked conditions.

He that is near any Sin, is in danger to fall into it. A true Penitent must not verge upon the Borders of Hell, not walk upon the utmost brink of his Liberty. *Illicitorum veniam postulantem, necesse est à multis licitis abstinere*, saith *Leo*. If we would be *in tuto*, we must go *in cauto*: not play upon the hole of the Serpent: avoid it, saith *Solomon*, *pass by it, turn from it, come not near it*.

I come to the next Assertion.

III. *Via Fugæ monstranda*. We must be shewed how to flee from it. Some Body must acquaint us with our danger, and how to escape it. Of our selves, we are like *Jonas*, a sleep under hatches in the midst of a Storm; Hell-fire may be about our Ears, ere we ever think of it: or, like Beasts in a Stable on fire, that will never stir out, or go about to escape it.

So then,

1. Here is *Officium Ministri*, 'tis our Office to forewarn you of Hell, and to teach you to flee from it. Nay, 'tis the work of an Angel, to bring *Lot* out of *Sodom*, and to conduct him to *Zoar*. Happy are they that can meet with a Guide to the *City of Refuge*, when the Avenger pursues them.

2. Here is *Beneficium Ministri Evangelici*. The Ministry of the Gospel, 'tis that, that teaches men to flee from it. The Law kindles this Fire, 'tis the Gospel that quenches it. *Lex operatur iram*; the Law can discover our danger: but 'tis the Gospel that refuses us. *Lex adducit ad januam; sed Gratia intromittit in Templum*. 'Tis *Jesus*, that delivers from the wrath to come, *1 Thess. i. 10*.

3. Her

3. Here is the *next view* of a Faithful Minister, such as *John Baptist* was. He makes *Serm. V.* this his main Work to rescue mens souls from the place of perdition. *We warn every man*, saith *Saint Paul*, and teach every man, that we may present every man perfect before God. Whilst the *Pharisees* are preaching mens Souls into desperate adventures, for their own by-ends; *St. John* aims at this, to teach them these two Lessons: *fugere Gehennam*, & *rapere Cælum*, to escape Hell, and to take Heaven by violence.

We have done with the first Particular of the Text, *St. John's* Reprehension. Now follows,

Secondly, His serious and necessary Injunction. *Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance*. He makes not a stop, and full point at his reprehension; but adds a faithful, and charitable direction. He calls them *Vipers*; not to reproach them, but to reprove them: He denounces the *wrath to come*; not to dismay them, but arouze them. *Severitatem, tanquam personam, induimus; sed mansuetudinem intus alimus*, saith *Gregory*. As *Christ* did towards the obstinate *Jews*, He looked angrily upon them: but, withal, he mourned for the hardness of their hearts, *Mark. iii. 5*.

It sets out to us the right way, and method of denouncing of Judgments: affright, and scare men: but pass no peremptory sentence upon them. *John* shuts *Heaven-gates*, against them; *sed in postliminio posuit pœnitentiam*, saith *Tertullian*: he places repentance to open the door to them. *Peter* thundered against *Simon Magus*: but, withal, gives him an inkling of mercy; *Pray that thy sins may be forgiven thee*.

It must teach Ministers to carry a steady hand, when they preach Judgments: lest, when they go to hew a Tree, they hit a man, *Deut. xix. 5*. This kind of Doctrine, 'tis like strong Physick; but a grain too much, may mar all. Do as careful Physicians do, when they give strong Potions, have a Cordial ready, in case of fainting. The Law must be preached, as it was first delivered, in the hand of a Mediator, *Gal. iii. 19*. As *Gerson* alluding to our Saviour's Transfiguration, tells us, *Moses, and Elias, must not appear alone in our preaching, but Christ must be with them*. The good Samaritan is ready furnished with Wine, and Oyl too; carries not Wine only about him, and stays for Oyl till he comes to the next Town; Like *Jehu*, flings down *Jezabel* presently; and afterwards, at leisure takes care for her Body. No, 'tis too late now; *The Dogs have devoured her*.

For the Injunction it self, it stands upon four Particulars.

First, Here is the Grace, and Virtue prescribed: that's *Repentance*.

Secondly, Here is the effectual Practice, and Exercise of this Grace: there must be *Fruits of Repentance*.

Thirdly, Here is the Production of those Fruits: they must be *brought forth*.

Fourthly, Here is the due Proportion, and Qualification of these Fruits: they must be *meet for repentance*.

First, The Grace, and Virtue prescribed; 'tis *Repentance*. 'Tis a spiritual Duty, beyond the reach, and compass of Morality. The Philosophers never dream'd of it: among all their Virtues, they never name repentance. And, as it is Spiritual, so 'tis Evangelical. The Law never mentions it: that's all for Innocency, nothing for Repentance. There is no *secunda Tabula post naufragium* in that Covenant. Do all exactly, or suffer unavoidably, that's the Tenour of the Law. 'Tis the Gospel, that offers, and accepts of Repentance.

To touch it briefly: See,

I. The Nature of it: and then,

II. The Virtue of it.

I. For the Nature of it. It is a sorrowful Confession of Sin, joyned with deprecation for Pardon, and resolution not to return to the Commission of it again. It hath many four, and sad Ingredients; yet no more than needs must: nay, as little as can be. Judge of it by an humane estimate 'twixt man, and man.

1. Confession: that's one Ingredient. Is there not reason and equity for this? Wouldest thou pardon that man, that will not acknowledge his offence, confess he hath wronged thee?

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2. Contrition, and Sorrow for Sin: that's a necessary Ingredient. Is there not great equity in this too? Wouldest thou pardon an offence to him, that is not grieved, that he hath provoked thee?

3. Deprecation for Pardon; that's a third Ingredient. Is there not good reason for this too? Who forgives that man that scorns to seek, and sue for remission?

4. Resolution not to sin again; that's a great Ingredient. There is much equity in this also. Who forgives him that will not promise to do so no more, not to offend hereafter?

No more of the Nature of it: Now,

II. For the Virtue of this Prescription. You may judge of that, by the Patients, to whom St. John prescribes it, *O generation of Vipers, bring forth fruits meet for repentance*. It is able to change, and alter, and convert Vipers. Vipers, they are odious, and venomous, and mischievous Creatures; yet see, Repentance belongs to such, they may get good by it. As the Father saith of God, *He is not a Jupiter, but a Jehovah; not a bare helper, but an All-sufficient Saviour*: So is this his Prescription. 'Tis not for less ails only, but for the most deadly diseases. St. Peter will undertake to cure *Simon Magus*, a Sorcerer, if he will take this Antidote. *David's Adultery*, and *Peter's Perjury*, and *Paul's Blasphemy*, all perfectly cured and done away by repentance. See what Cures it wrought at *Corinth*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. *Fornicators, Adulterers, Idolaters, Sodomites; such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified*. It will turn Monsters of Vice into Miracles of Virtue. Thus *Chrysostome* breaks forth into admiration of these Cures upon those Words of the Psalm, *Narrabo mirabilia: Quæ mirabilia? quod facit ex adultero castum, ex avaro liberalem, ex crudeli misericordem*. Here is the change of the right hand of the most High. Here is the Sovereign Virtue of Repentance.

I pass to the next; which is,

Secondly, The effectual Practice, and Exercise of this Grace. He requires fruits of Repentance; Fruits, that's Works. St. Paul expounds it so, *Act. xxvi. 20. I have shewed unto them, that they should repent, and do works meet for repentance*. Works of Repentance, they are Fruits of Repentance. These good Works are called *Fruits of Repentance*,

I. Because Repentance, 'tis a vital Grace, active, and operative: no still, quiet quality, and habit of the mind; but stirring, and working. 'Tis a true saying in the School, *Habitus non salvant, sed actus*: Without these holy actions, all your good qualities will stand you in no stead. The voice of *Rachel*, 'tis the voice of Repentance; *Give me Children, or I die*: it longs to be fruitful.

II. He calls for *Fruits of Repentance*, that adds a second: they must be *actus positivi*, something is to be done, and performed by us. Repentance, 'tis not only a mortifying Grace; but quickening, and enlivening. A bare Negative Repentance will not serve the turn. Repentance doth both dead, and kill the root of Sin: and then implants a new Principle of Life, that will spring and fructifie. *Cease to do evil, and learn to do well*, saith *Isaiah*. And so St. Peter, *That we being dead unto sin, may live unto righteousness*. When God created the Trees, he created them fruitful, *Let the earth bring forth the fruit-tree, yielding fruit*.

Of all others, God cannot endure an unfruitful Christian. He is planted in the Garden of God. A man will let other Trees grow in his Field, or Meadows; but he will plant none but Fruit-trees in his Garden, or Orchard. Indeed, a Christian is good for nothing, but for fruit. Thus the Church, 'tis compared to a Vine; there comes no other good of it, but only Fruit. *Ezek. xv. 23. What is the Vine-tree good for? shall wood be taken of it, to do any work? it affords no Timber, not so much as a pin of wood can be made of it: 'tis only the fruit that makes it commendable*.

III. These Works of Repentance, they are called Fruits, because they are such Works as are useful, and fruitful; there is good comes of them: whereas sins are called *unfruitful works*, *Ephes. v. 11*. Thus Paul enforces fruitfulness in good works, *These things are good, and profitable to men*, *Tit. iii. 8*. And again, *Let ours learn to maintain good Works, that they be not unfruitful*. Every Penitent must be an

Onesimus,

Onesimus, like *St. Paul's Convert*, as his Name betokens, he must be Profitable. 'Tis *Luther's* Observation upon that in the *Galatians*, *The deeds of the flesh are manifest*, and then he adds, the *Fruits of the Spirit*: Mark, saith he, he calls good Works the fruits of the Spirit: but evil Works he calls not fruits, but only deeds of the Flesh: *They are not fruitful, and beneficial.*

IV. Good Works are called *Fruits of Repentance*; even though properly, and immediately they proceed from some other Graces. The reason is, because Repentance is one of those prime Graces, that are imperative and predominant, and commanding Graces; such, as do not only elicit, and exercise their own actions, but they have a power to employ other Virtues, and set them on working.

Thus Faith, that's a predominant commanding Grace; the acts of all kind of Virtues are attributed to it, *Heb. xi.* So Love, that's a predominant Grace, it sets other Graces on work, *1 Cor. xiii. 7.* *It bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things.* Such a Grace is Repentance; like the first wheel, or spring in a Clock; like the *Tree of Life*, it bears twelve manner of fruits. It will work upon every Faculty, quicken every Grace, provoke to every good Duty, and fructifie in all the works of Piety.

V. Saint *John* calls for *fruits of repentance*; 'tis a full Word, a Term of perfection, and maturity. There are some things, that tend towards Repentance, but yet come short of this pitch of Perfection.

1. There be *Signa Pœnitentiæ*, some certain Signs of Repentance, that do accompany it, and yet may be without it. *Abah*, he rent his clothes, and wore sackcloth, and went softly, in a mourning manner; but there was no true repentance. The *Ninivites*, they fasted, and put on sackcloth too, and withal they repented: But God's eye was not on these signs; but on the fruits of Repentance. 'Tis not said, God saw their fasting, and sackcloth: But *God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and he had mercy on them.*

2. There are *Initialia Pœnitentiæ*, some Proffers of Repentance; but yet not full Fruits. Some sudden pangs of sorrow, some shiverings, and grudgings of Repentance; as it was with *Felix*, a qualm came over his conscience: but these often fail, and come not to maturity; *ἡ μετανοία*, saith Christ, they come not to perfection. *St. Augustine* presses this Point upon our sudden Motions: *Si gemis, parturi, si parturis, pari.* Be not alwayes in travel; but bring forth something.

3. There are some *Actus formati Pœnitentiæ*; as inward Compunction, detestation of what is past, good resolutions for time to come. This is *radix Pœnitentiæ*; here is the root and sap of Repentance: But yet *St. John* goes farther, requires fruits, that our lives, and works, and conversation, should testify our repentance. *Qui maturitatis fructum querit, despicit amœna camporum: grati flores, sed gratior panis*, saith the Father. The Spring is pleasant; but the Husbandman looks for Harvest. 'Tis that, which crowns the year; when the Fields stand thick with corn. A Christian must not be *Earinus*, but *Oporinus*: not always blooming, and blossoming, but fruitful, and abundant in the work of the LORD.

I proceed to the next particular: which is,

Thirdly, The Production of this Fruit, 'tis called here a *Bringing forth*. The word is *ποιῶν*. A full, significant Word, it carries Emphasis with it, and it imports three things:

I. *Ποιῶν*, 'Tis a Verb active; and so it imports the Activity of our repentance. And that which I note from it, is this: *A Christian must be an Agent in the work of repentance, not meerly Passive.* There is a sorrow, and anguish for sin, where a man is a meer Patient. So it fared with *Judas*: 'tis said, he repented, *Mat. xxvii. 3.* Sorrow did eat, and gnaw at his heart, full fore against his will. We may mistake these checks, and remorse of Conscience, for the motions of repentance. *Dolor morbi* is one thing, and *dolor medicinæ* another; 'tis one thing to be sick of a disease, that's against our will; another thing to be Physick-sick: we apply our selves to that. A true Penitent is active, provokes, and stirs up his heart to sorrow, searches out his sins, calls them to remembrance, afflicts himself for them, prays that he may sorrow, grieves that he cannot grieve; never repents, that he hath repented.

That's

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That's the first, the Activity of Repentance. Again,

II. *Ποιήσαι, Bring forth*, it imports a second thing; that's the Propriety. It requires our own personal performance of repentance. We must have Fruits, and they must be fruits of our own bringing forth. I observe it against the usual practice of the Church of Rome in this point of Repentance. They are for Fruits; but, if you have none of your own, they can help you with some. *Ite ad vendentes*: you may buy them, or borrow them, or beg them of others. They teach, there are some *Opera pœnalia*, some Penitential works, that you may have others to do for you, and yet serve as well, as if you did them your self. And they have good store of such fruits: and the Pope, you know, he hath his Fruiterers, that cry them up and down the Country. The *Marcionites* taught *vicarium Baptisma*, and these teach *Vicariam Pœnitentiam*. These could be baptized, and these can repent by a Proxie, and Substitute. And, I fear, there are many amongst us, that like well enough of this Point of Popery. We hope, there are some Devout men, that pray, and repent, in these days of judgment, and we hope to fare the better for them, though we repent not. No; we can neither borrow, nor buy, either Oyl, or Olives. 'Tis *ποιήσαι*, not *παραποιήσαι*, We must *bring forth* fruits our selves; not purchase them of others. Repentance, 'tis the Physick of the Soul: was it ever heard, that one man took Physick for another, and procured him health by it.

III. There is yet one thing more in *ποιήσαι*, it imports the reality of our repentance. 'Tis one thing *agere*, and another thing *facere*. To do a thing is one thing; to make a thing is another. Repentance, in St. John's Dialect; 'tis *Habitus factivus*. There are some actions, that, when they are over, leave nothing behind them: but making produces some real effect. And such must be our repentance; not a sudden, transient, vanishing repentance, like *Ezekiel's* Musick, Chap. xxxiii. 32. *Thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and plays well on an Instrument; for they hear thy words, but do them not*. Sweet Airs begetting good motions for the time, but there's nothing comes of it. Repentance must work some real, and permanent effect in us: it must make an impression upon our Soul, work a change, and effectual alteration in us, set our hearts, and lives in a new frame of Obedience, that we may be said to be quite other men.

The last Particular remains, with which I will conclude;

That is,

Fourthly, The Proportion, and Qualification of these fruits; they must be *meet for Repentance*. 'Tis not every kind of fruit that will beseeem repentance. 'Tis *Gregorie's* Observation, *Alii fructus decent innocentiam, alii pœnitentiam*. That Measure of Obedience, that will pass for an innocent man, will not be accepted from one that is penitent. God expects much more from him. How then shall we make a due estimate of the fitness of these *fruits of repentance*? We may make a double Estimate of them.

The first a Positive.

The second a Comparative.

I. In a Positive Estimate, the fruits may be judged meet, and beseeeming Repentance, if they be thus conditioned.

1. For their Nature; they must be serious, and substantial, and weighty works. They must be *inter βαρύνοντα ὑμᾶς*, as our Saviour speaks, the great, and weighty works of Piety. Repentance, 'tis a sad work, and must not have slight, and perfunctory expressions. A true Penitent will stick at no labour, or cost; enquires with them in *Micha*, *Wherewith shall I appear before God?* And the Prophet directs us to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. See the Works St. John prescribes to the Penitents, *Luke* 3. cloathing the naked, feeding the hungry, forbearing oppression. So *Isaiah* tells us, in these Addresses to God, we must not present him with a bundle of Bullrushes for our penitential fruits; he prescribes and expects othergese performances.

2. These Fruits must be *meet for repentance* in their kind. Take it in a double Notion;

1. By way of Contrariety, and Opposition. The Duties that are contrary to

to the sins we repent of, they are seasonable Works, and meet for repentance. A true Penitent will avoid every sin; but chiefly he hath his eye at that sin which proved his ruine, and will set himself to the practice of the contrary Virtue. As men that have been sick upon some surfeit, will keep a general good Diet; but above all, abstain from the meat that hurt them. *Ea specialiter horreas, quæ specialiter appetebas*, saith St. Bernard. Turn thy longing into loathing. *Aquam, fluentem in cloacam, deducas in hortum*, saith St. Augustine. This is done,

2. By way of Imitation, and Holy emulation, by transforming of sin into a spiritual Virtue. As St. Paul exhorts; *Be not drunk with Wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit*, take your fill of that. So St. John, *Do violence to no man*, but *Take Heaven by violence*. *Hæc vis Deo grata est*.

We should thus emulate, and imitate our sins, as the *Philistines* did their punishments. 'Twas not every Oblation would serve; but they would imitate and express their plagues in the choice of their Offerings. They were annoyed with Mice, and Emerods: they make golden Mice, and golden Emerods, and send them for a Trespas offering to the God of *Israel*. Addict thy self to an holy covetousness, to an heavenly ambition, to an unsatiable thirsting after spiritual things. This is *indoles*, & *ingenium pœnitentiæ*, to appease our God with services suitable to our sins, and offences.

3. These Fruits must be meet for repentance in their Measure. One Measure may serve for an innocent man, but a greater will be expected from him that is penitent. 'Tis not every scantling, that will go for a penitential work. Others may sell by the strike, but 'tis heaped measure that befits repentance.

A true Penitent aims at three proportions, over and above the ordinary size of a good Duty.

I. The first is a Proportion of a fit Compensation. He labours to do as much in the right way, as he did in the wrong. Paul enforces this, *Rom. vi. 19. As you have yielded your members servants, and weapons to uncleanness; so yield your members weapons, and servants to righteousness*. They must be *ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνομίας*, weapons for righteousness, as well as for sin. We must not be *armati peccatores*, & *inermes sancti*; not strong sinners, and feeble Saints. And they must be *δούλοι*, servants to God, as they have been to sin; not bind our selves to a trade of sin, and use Religion only as a recreation

2. He aims at a Proportion of Amerciament. A Penitent must do more than ordinary, to amerce, and afflict, and punish, and to take revenge upon himself for his former mis-doings. That's one reason why Paul took such pains out-wrought all the Apostles; *I laboured more than all*, because he had been a Persecutor, *1 Cor. xv. 9. Thus*, saith Chrysostome, David punished himself for lusting, by denying himself the enjoyment of a natural longing for the Waters of Bethlehem. He will practise not only sobriety, but austerity; put himself under a more severe discipline, and abridge himself of lawful delights for his unlawful pleasures.

3. There is yet a third Proportion; that's a Proportion of Redemption. A Penitent must redeem his former omissions by a double diligence. Compensation doth as much good, as it did evil; but redemption exacts twice as much. He, that loytered in a journey, must double his pace: he must do as much in a short time, as others have done in a long. It is called the *restoring of the years of the Grass-hopper, and Canker-worm*, when the fruits of one year are sufficient for two. When Husband-men break up their Grounds, that have long lain fallow, they look for great increase, a double crop, to satisfy for the former barrenness. Repentance sends us to God, as Jacob did his sons the second time into *Egypt*, *Carry double money in your hands*, enough to quit the old score, and to make new provision.

There is yet the other Estimate of this Meetness; and that is,

II. Comparative. And this Comparison must be 'twixt the Fruits of our Sins, and the Fruits of our Repentance.

There are three bitter Fruits, three noysom malignities in Sin.

I. It

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1. It steams upward, in the Dishonour of God.
2. It soaks inward, in a sensual Delight.
3. It taints all about it, in evil Example to others.

Suitable to all these three, thou must proportion thy Repentance.

1. Consider how greatly thou hast dishonoured thy God, and impaired his glory: God expects reparation of his honour at thy hands. This Fruit is remarkable in St. Paul's repentance. He was a Blasphemer, and compelled others to blaspheme; see what reparation he makes of God's honour after his conversion, Gal. i. 23. *He that persecuted us in times past, now he preacheth the Faith, which before he destroyed, and they glorified God in me.* God gains as much glory by St. Paul, as he suffered blasphemy. *Ex Lupo fit Ovis*, saith St. Augustine. Nay, more than so, *Ex Lupo fit Pastor*, of a Wolf he becomes not only a Sheep, but a Shepherd. He will do God as much service now, as he had done him dishonour, and disservice before.

2. Thou must proportion thy repentance according to thy delight, and pleasure in sin: sorrow as deeply as thou hast sinned delightfully: shew as much detestation of it, as thou has found delectation in it. Use thy sin as Ammon did his Tamar: he loathed her more than ever he loved her. We must both as much sorrow for sin, as we had delight in it: and as much delight in Piety, as we have taken pleasure in iniquity. St. Augustine points at it: there must be *dolor de peccato*, and *gaudium de dolore*. And it must be down-weight: not an ounce of spiritual, for a pound of carnal delight, and pleasure.

3. Take measure at the third Malignity, thy Scandal to others. Hath thy ill example emboldned others to sin? let thy good example draw others to repentance. 'Tis *Conversus, confirma fratres*. Peter had subverted them by his sin; he must convert them by his example: David vowed this fruit of his Repentance, *I will teach transgressours thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* He had been a publick scandal, he will make himself a publick example, and spectacle of repentance. He took care no man should abuse his example any more, removed that stumbling block out of the way, as they did the dead body of Amasa, from hindering the People. He wrote a *snasdetind* against himself; penned, and published a Psalm of his repentance.

These Conditions, and Proportions, observed, will qualifie our Fruits, make them meet for repentance. They will be ἀξιου, if they be ἀντὶ ἀξιοι. Put them in the same ballance with thy sins: if they turn the scale, and preponderate, they will be accepted, provided that thy ballance be true. It must be *aurificis trutina, non statera popularis*. Or, as Augustine expresses it, *We must not go to our Neighbours scales, but to the Kings Standard.* And yet, to help our defects, St. Bernard shews us that Beam of the Sanctuary, where allowances are made, alluding to that saying of Job, *Oh that I were weighed in a Ballance! If thou wilt put thy self to this Trial*, saith he, *Statera* must be *crux Christi*. His Merits, and satisfaction can infinitely weigh down both our sins, and our sufferings.

Now, let us beseech him, who is the God of all Grace, the worker, and author of Repentance, that he would frame our hearts to a sorrowful bewailing our own sins, and the sins of the Land, and to a plentiful increase in all fruits of Repentance, that being partakers of that Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, and as this day appeared to us, we may deny ungodliness, and Worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World, abounding in all the fruits of holiness, which are by Jesus Christ, to his praise, and glory. This he grant for his Son's sake, our Lord, and blessed Saviour; To whom, &c.

A

SERMON

Preached in

LENT.

Acts ii. 37.

Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men, and Brethren, What shall we do?



HIS Passage of Scripture, from the words I have read, to the end of the Chapter, contains a relation of a famous Conversion to the *Christian Faith*, wrought by the Preaching of the Apostle *St. Peter*. And it worthily deserves our best attention, as being an Example propounded in Scripture, for our imitation.

Such stories as this are recorded in God's Book, not as bare Narrations, what others have done: but they carry with them the use and force of a powerful Direction; and they speak to every one of us in our Saviours Language, *Luke x. 37. Abi tu, & fac similiter.* Transform thy self into the Example of this holy Conversion.

And, if we take a particular view of it, we shall find it very remarkable in the several parts and passages of it.

First, It is remarkable, and worth our observing, in the very first Order of it. 'Tis the first Conversion that was wrought by the Apostles in the *Christian Church*; the first draught that *St. Peter* made, after he was fully Authorised, and sent by Christ, to be a *Fisher of men*: *Primitiæ Evangelii*, the First-fruits of the Gospel; the first handful of ripe ears of Corn offered up to God to sanctifie the whole Harvest; the goodly bunch of *Eskol* gathered by these first Spies, the Apostles, betokening, and assuring the Churches fruitfulness. The Church may say to these Converts, what *Jacob* said to *Reuben* his eldest Son, *Thou art my First-born, my Might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of power, and the excellency of dignity is found in you.*

'Twas an high Prerogative, and title of Honour, that *St. Paul* gives to his beloved *Epinetus*, *Rom. xvi. 5.* *He is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.* These Converts here carry away the dignity of Birth-right from all other Churches; which made the after-Churches of the *Gentiles* yield the honour of Precedency to this Church of *Jerusalem*. She is called *Matrix Ecclesiæ* by the ancient Fathers; the Eldest Sister, nay, the *Metropolis*, the Mother of all other Churches. *Andronicus* and *Junia's* Commendations are due from other Christians unto these Converts; they were of note among the Apostles, and were in Christ before us.

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That's

Serm. I.

That's the first Consideration, 'tis *Prima Conversio*.

Secondly, It is remarkable for the Time, and Season, when these Converts embrace the Faith, and profess Religion. We all know, 'twas a sad time of Persecution. This *Sect*, (as they call it) was at this time *everywhere spoken against*, Acts xxviii. 22. In the time of Peace, and when the Sun-shine of Prosperity graces Religion, when Christianity grows into fashion, and is in request, 'tis no such great matter to become a Disciple; but, when 'tis *seculi reatus*, the great crime of the World to be a Christian, all men oppose it, and cry it down, then resolutely to profess it, makes such a Conversion far more honourable. *Felicitas nos, sed fortius isti*. We, under a *Constantine*, believe more happily; but these, under an *Herod*, and *Pilate*, believe more resolutely.

'Twas the great praise of *Moses's* Faith, that he joyned to the *People of God* in their affliction, was not afraid, nor ashamed of the rebuke of Christ, but gloried in it. He is a Christian of some worth, that will not only follow Christ into *Jerusalem*, when all sing *Hosanna*; then hold up his Train, when he goes in Triumph; but that will stick to him, when they cast him out of *Jerusalem*; follow him to *Golgotha*, when they cry, *Crucifixe him, Crucifixe him*, and bear up his Cross.

Canst thou endure the threatnings of the World? saith Chrysostome; Si credideris, omnes odio te habebunt. If thou believest, all men will hate thee, and persecute thee; doth not that deter thee? Thou art a right-bred Christian. That was observable in the condition of these mens Conversion, and makes it remarkable.

Thirdly, It is remarkable in the Condition, and Quality of the Persons: A mixed, confused company of men, strangely disposed and affected before their Conversion. They run together, and flock about the Apostles, with no very religious purpose; but meerly to gaze, and wonder at them, they come together to see some strange sight, Verse 7. Nay, worse than so, they fall a scoffing, and deriding the Apostles, they mock at them, saying, *These men are full of new Wine*; they had been at the *Wine*, taken a *Cup too much*, that made them so talkative; nay, the whole company of them were guilty of murdering our Saviour, they had imbrued their hands in his precious blood. St. Peter charges them with it, Verse 23. A strange company of men, unlikely to be converted; *Lord, can these dead bones live?* Is there hope, that such sinners as these should ever repent? Yes, St. Peter assails them, and prevails with them, wins them to Religion, and gains them to Christ. A glorious Conversion! *Monstra Vitiorum, in miracula Virtutum*. Here are Monsters of Vice, turned into Miracles of Virtue. We may well admire this work, as Bernard did the Conversion of St. Paul; *O magnitudinem misericordiae, O efficaciam gratiae!* O the greatness of God's Mercy that he would! and O the Power of Christ's Grace, that it could reclaim, and convert such Converts as these!

That's the third, the Condition of the Persons.

Fourthly, It is remarkable in the great Number, and Multitude of Converts. Not some one, or some few listen to St. Peter, and yield to him; though that had been much, out of such a rabble, and crue, to save any: but see here, a mighty Conversion; *Three thousand Souls* gain'd to God, by Saint Peter's Sermon. *Lord, we have laboured all night, and have catched nothing*. Saint Peter's Net, is filled with Souls at the first casting of it. *Who are these, that come flying as a cloud, and as a full flock of Doves to their windows?* *Isai. lx. 8*. Here is an overflowing Spring-tide of Piety, and Religion. *My Soul longs for the first ripe Grapes*, saith God in the Prophet. See, here is not *racematio*, but *vindemia*; not a Cluster, or two, but a plentiful Vintage. Such was the power of Religion in those Primitive Times; so mightily grew the Word, and prevailed.

Fifthly, It is remarkable for the compleat, entire fulness of their Conversion. We may see here an exact form of Conversion: Religion hath here a perfect work in them. They are no *Agrippa's*, half Christians, almost Believers; you may discern all the members, and lineaments of the *New-man* fairly framed in them.

First,

First, They are perplexed, and troubled for their sins, *pricked at their heart.* *Serm. I.*
They are the Throws and Pangs of the *New-birth*, the first step to Conversion.

Secondly, They repent, and believe, and are baptized; that's the second.

Thirdly, They are diligent and constant in all the Duties of God's Service and Worship: *Verse 24. They continue stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine, and fellowship;* in the Sacrament, and Prayer.

Fourthly, Their Religion is not confined to the Church only, but they are fruitful in all works of Charity, and Alms to the Poor, *Verse 45.*

Fifthly, and lastly, They live together in all Christian Love and Amity, *Verse 46.* Here's an exact pattern of a through conversion, a complete, and perfect Frame of an holy Church.

My Text contains the first *member* and step of their *conversion*; that's the *perplexity of their spirit*, into which they were cast upon sight of their sins. A Meditation never untimely; but now most suitable, and seasonable for this time of repentance. And repentance, we know, 'tis the Medicine, and Physick of a sick, sinful Soul: That, by which the Soul of man, distemper'd, and surfeited by sin, is cured, and recovered; 'tis that, which stirs, and purges those noysome humours, with which the Conscience is clogg'd, and furcharg'd; and so, by God's institution, 'tis that necessary Preparative, that fits, and disposes the soul for the sovereign Cure by our Saviour's Blood.

And, as in bodily Cures, we content not our selves with bare Rules, and Prescripts; but desire to know how the Physick hath wrought upon others before, to see the *Probatums*, what Cures have been wrought in the right use of it: so likewise 'tis useful to take notice of those happy Penitents that have found good by it, and were recovered; and to consider the fearful miscarriages of others, whose sorrows, and pangs of Repentance, have proved dismal, and deadly.

And here we have, in the very entrance of this story, two pregnant examples; *Judas* that betrayed our Saviour; and these *Jews*, that crucified him. Both sick of the same Disease; but these are recovered by repentance, and are received to mercy. The Physick was strong, and painful; but it wrought kindly, had its proper work with them. And *Judas*, he repents too, falls into much sorrow and heaviness; but it works too strongly with him, rents his heart-strings, fetches up his bowels, hastens, and brings upon him a fearful destruction.

Either example of Sorrow is useful; *triste, sed salubre exemplum*; it cannot but astonish the prophaneest sinner, and strike him with horror. As when the People saw *Amasa* wallowing in his blood in the midst of the way, they all stood still at that ghastly sight, and *Joab* was fain to remove the body out of the way, ere they would go forward: So, let a sinner be in the hottest pursuit of any sin, when he sees the souls of these Penitents weltering in their Gore, 'twill stop his career, and the Devil desires to remove these spectacles of sorrow out of our sight, lest they hinder our pursuit in the ways of sin.

Nay, let us view, and consider well of them. *Iustus, cum viderit vindictam, lavabit vestigia in sanguine peccatorum*; as *Gregory* Moralizes that place of the Psalmist. We should wash our footsteps in the blood that flows from these wounded Penitents. As Physicians do, they will beg the bodies of some dead men for use of Anatomies: So let us make use of these mortified Penitents; not bury them presently; but study to rip up, and anatomize their Conscience, and so learn the frame and disposition of our own.

For the Words themselves, they represent unto us the anguish, and perplexity, into which these Converts were cast: and in them observe these three Particulars:

First, The Means, that wrought this trouble, and perplexity: that's the Sermon of *St. Peter*: *When they heard this.*

Secondly, the Anguish it self that's wrought in them; the spirit of Compunction hath seized upon their Souls: *They are prickt at their heart.*

Thirdly, The Course they took for ease and relief; they repair to the Apostles, crave their direction: *Men, and Brethren, What shall we do?*

Serm. I.

First, is the Means, that wrought this anguish and compunction; 'tis St. Peter's Sermon: *When they heard this*. The Text tells us of a wound, that was given them, that pierced their heart. Here we see both the Weapon, that made it, and the place where it entered. The Weapon, that's the Sword of the Spirit: the Word of God in St. Peter's Sermon: of that anon. The entrance it makes, 'tis by The Ear.

In Bodily strokes, he that means to hit the Heart, must take another aim; not run his Weapon in at the Ear: but he, that means to wound the Heart spiritually, his directest passage is through the Ear. In this case, there is an immediate conveyance from the Ear to the Heart. *Gladius in ore, & vulnus per aurem*, suit well together. *The sword, that proceeds out of the mouth*, Revel. i. 16. hath it's proper entrance in at the Ear. What Peter did rashly at another time, he doth here seasonably, and with great advice. When he would wound *Malchus*, he struck at his Ear; now, that he desires to pierce the Inwards, and to hit the Heart-vein of his Auditours, he strikes at the Ear, by it he conveys his Weapons to their inward Parts.

This sense of Hearing, 'tis the main Inlet of all saving knowledge. *Auris animæ* os, saith St. *Augustine*. The Ear, 'tis the Mouth of the Soul, whether for Meat or Medicine, for our first Conversion, or for after Instruction. Hence Repentance 'tis called *the opening of the Ear*, Job xxxiii. 16. *He opens the ears of men, and seals their Instruction*.

The Truth is, an attentive Ear, 'tis a necessary advantage; that must be given to the work of Conversion. St. Peter makes this his first request, Ver. 14. *Ye men of Israel, hearken unto my words*. And the reason is evident; for as all other works of Grace, so this of Compunction, 'tis not any inbred thing in us; but must be conveyed from without, by these knowing, and teaching, and apprehensive senses. Men may as well expect good Corn on their Land without plowing, and sowing; as true sorrow, and repentance, without hearing, and attending. May be, some qualms, and risings of Conscience, possibly of our selves; but they are all *iwra*. windy and false, and subventaneous conceptions, never come to good. He, that will be a true Penitent, a sound, and serious Convert, must bow his Ear to instruction, offer his attention, as young *Samuel* did. *Speak, LORD, for thy servant beareth*. *Listen, and your souls shall live*; saith the Prophet *Isaiah*.

The passage, and entrance then, it is the Ear; but what's the Weapon St. Peter uses to pierce, and wound them? That will appear to us in these three gradual Apprehensions.

First, 'Tis *Verbum Dei*. The Weapon that wounds them, 'tis the Word of God.

Secondly, 'Tis *Verbum convictivum*; 'tis a Word of Reproof and Conviction. He doth *ἐλέγχειν ἀπορίμους*, he uses a sharp, and quick, and cutting Reprehension.

Thirdly, 'Tis *Verbum convictivum de his peccatis*; 'tis a Word convincing of some more remarkable and special sins, of which they were guilty.

First, God's Word in the general, that's the Means, that works this compunction, that's the choice, sanctified Instrument; appointed by God for this sacred work. The speaking to exhortation and doctrine, is the way to convince and convert Souls. 'Twas not the Apostles speaking of Languages, Verse 6. that wrought this work; though that was a divine and glorious thing, the most mocked at it, the best did wonder at it, it had no farther effect in them. But let St. Peter come, and preach to them, lay open the Scriptures; that's powerful and prevalent, that takes them presently. *If you speak strange Languages*, saith St. Paul, they will say, *ye are mad*; or, as these blasphemed, they were gone with drink: but, if ye prophesie, a sinner is convinced and judged, and will confess that *God speaks in you*, 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, 25.

This sacred Ordinance hath a secret unavoidable Power over the Soul. As *Origen* compares it, *Sicut naturalis attractus est magneti ad ferrum, bitumini ad ignem; sic animæ ad verbum*: As the Load-stone draws Iron, and Brimstone catches Fire, and kindles presently; so the soul quickly receives impression from the Word of God.

The Scripture sets out the vertue of it by many expressions. It hath the force of an Hammer, that can *break rocks in pieces*, Jer. xxiii. 29. It enflames like Fire; *did not our hearts burn within us, when he opened to us the Scriptures?* Luke xxiv. 32. It pierces like an Arrow: *Thine Arrows are sharp in the hearts of thine enemies*, Psal.

xlv. 5. *Tertullian* and *Augustine* expound that place of the force of the Scriptures: It hath the sharpness of a Sword; nay, 'tis *gladius biceps, Rhomphæa bis acuta*, it cuts both ways. It hath a killing power in it; it slew *St. Paul*, laid him for a dead man, *Rom. vii. 13. He smites the Earth with the rod of his Mouth, and with the breath of his Lips doth he slay the Nations*, *Isaiah xi. 4.* The Prophet *Hosea* shews the sharpness of this Weapon: *I have hewed them by my Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth*, *Chap. vi. 5.*

This, and this alone is able to affect, and affright, and perplex the Conscience. 'Tis the Word of him that hath power upon the soul, that's able to question it, to torture, and torment it. 'Tis the Law of Conscience; all other Laws have both back and edge, strength and sharpness from this Law, to affect our Consciences: We must therefore obey them, because this Law binds us to it.

The force of this will appear, when the Parties spoken to, have all outward Advantages not to be affrighted; as,

I. *Nemini cogniti.* Secret sinners, whom no Eye can discover, yet the force of this Word convinces them, and strikes them with horror. *Quid prodest neminem habere conscium, habenti conscientiam?* saith *Lactantius*. The Conscience cannot *verba reticere loquenti*; but answers, like an *Eccho*, confesses presently, when this Word accuses it.

II. *Nemini subditi.* They that are beyond all humane check or control. *Is it fit to say to a King, Thou art wicked? and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* *Job xxxiv. 18.* Yet, when this Word speaks, *Ahab* is troubled; *David's* heart smites him, and *Josiah's* heart melts, *Felix* shivers and trembles at it. As *Chrysostom* observes of *David's* Repentance, *In tanta positus potestate, tot astantibus, & officia deferentibus, ubi qui timetur nullus est* (there was no Pope then, to control Kings) *quem omnes timent; incurvatur tamen & humiliatur.* O, this voice of God, 'tis a glorious voice, it shakes the mighty Cedars, rents in pieces the Rocks, and grinds them to powder.

Secondly, 'Tis *Verbum convictivum.* *St. Peter* makes choice of that Word of God, that was most fit and proper, to detect, and convict them; and he doth manage it so, that they could not avoid the dint, and edge of it. And this he doth by a more close, and particular application of it to their sinful condition. This conviction and thorow-application, 'tis exceeding requisite to work this compunction. 'Tis not the flourishing, or brandishing of a Sword in the Air, that will wound, or pierce; but the stroke of the Weapon must be brought home to the Body, or no wound will be given. This penitential sorrow, 'tis the Physick of the Soul, and Physick cannot work till it be applyed. 'Tis not sufficient to shew a man Physick, or to set it by him; but the sick man must be made to take it, e're it do him any good. General discourses are like the beams of the Sun dispers'd in the air, they may warm us a little; but that's all: Conviction is like a Burning-glass, that gathers all the beams into one point, or center, and fastens them upon the Soul, and so kindles, and enflames it. Thus *Nathan* recovered *David*. While he kept aloof in a general discourse, and told him a Parable, *David* was never troubled with the sense of his sin, never suspected it concerned him; but, when he closed with him, told him, *Thou art the man*, thou hast deflowred *Bathsheba*, thou hast wounded *Uriah*: Oh! then his heart smote him, he cries out of his sin, and sues for mercy. The Woman of *Samaria* could hold talk with Christ, and answer him shrewdly, while Christ discoursed in general of matters of Religion; but, when he came home to her Conscience, convinced her of her lewd and naughty life, that she lived in Adultery, then she yields presently, *O Sir, I perceive you are a Prophet, I see God is in you indeed.* I, this is the Preaching which *Solomon* commends, *Eccles. xii. 11.* *The words of the Wise are like Goats*, that must be run into the flesh: as Nails driven up to the head, fastned and rivited into the Soul of a sinner.

Thirdly, 'Twas *Verbum convictivum de his peccatis.* He charges them, in a special manner with these, and these sins, as those that are likeliest to perplex their soul, and bring them to compunction.

I. Murther, and Blood-shed.

II. Mocking, and deriding, and slandering the Apostles.

III. Opposing

Serm. I.

III. Opposing, rejecting, disclaiming of Christ.

These are *Peccata primæ magnitudinis*, sins of the first magnitude; these look ghastly upon the soul, and will haunt it with horror. These raise up an *Hue and Cry* in the Conscience, and pursue it eagerly. Conviction of such sins will make us resolve of a thorow-repentance, even of other sins also. *A man, saith Chrysostome, that hath some easie infirmities, goes not to the Physician for every ail: but, if he fall in morbum fonticum, some dangerous disease; then he will take Physick for it, and for his other infirmities.* Or, as in an house, saith he, the shattering of a Tile, or two, makes us not fall to a repair: but, if the Main Timber be decayed, then we pull down all, and make all new again. Or, as elsewhere he speaks, as a strong stroke upon a loud string of an Instrument will make all the other strings to give a sound too. In this Case it fares with the Soul, as with a man laid up, and imprisoned upon some great Execution, then he looks for Arrest upon Arrest, calls in all his other Creditours, and compounds with them: so the conviction of some great impiety breeds a confession of other iniquities. The soul, being arrested upon the guilt of these sins, repents of them, and makes his peace with God for all other his transgressions.

This is the method that *Peter* takes to bring them to compunction; thinks it not sufficient to tell them they are sinners, and they must repent. As, in course of Law, general accusations will ground no Action: if we come to accuse a man, 'tis not sufficient to lay to his charge, that he is a Malefactor; but we must charge him with particulars: so, would a sinner arraign his Conscience before God's Tribunal, he must frame an Indictment against himself of his more notorious, and personal Impieties.

Indeed the World takes great exception against this kind of dealing, and snuffs at it. It made *Ahab* account *Elias* his enemy, and to hate *Micaiah*, not endure to hear him. The *Galatians* think hardly of *St. Paul*, Gal. iv. 16. *Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* But *David* counts such his only friends, *Psal. cxli. 5. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let them reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oil.* Faithful are the wounds of a Friend, saith *Solomon*, Prov. xxvii. 6. *Mais amat objurgator sanus, quam adulator ungens*, saith *St. Augustine*. The World counts it love to forbear reproof; hatred, and ill will, to tell men their faults. What thinks God of it? Quite contrary, *Levit. xix. 17. Thou shalt nor hate thy Brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.* *Peccata permittere, non est mansuetudo, sed crudelitas*, saith *St. Augustine*: 'tis mercy and compassion thus to trouble, and perplex them. *Quid tam pium, quam Medicus ferens ferramentum? non est illa crudelitas, sed charitas.* To cut, and launce apostumated Sores, 'tis not Cruelty, but Charity. As he, that binds a man in a Phrensie; or he, that pulls and disquiets a man in a Lethargy; *ambo obus molestus est, sed ambo curat*; he troubles them both, but he shews mercy to both. *Ligatur Phreneticus, stimuletur Lethargicus, ambo offenduntur, sed ambo diliguntur.*

However the World thinks of this course, we have here three warrants for it in the Text.

1. 'Tis *Praxis Apostolica*. If we trouble, and disquiet, and perplex your Souls, we have our warrant from *St. Peter's* example. *Sic fecitavit Petrus, sic concionatus est Paulus*; their Preaching wrought in their Auditors, not itching Ears, but aking Hearts. Lift up thy voice like a Trumpet, saith God to his Prophet: that's a shrill and a piercing sound; it sounds *classicum ad pœnitentiam*, a Retreat from sin, and an Alarm to Repentance. Let not the smiles, and applauses of thine Audience, saith *St. Hierom*, but their sighs, and groans, be thy praise, and commendation.

2. A second Warrant for this reproving in the Text, 'tis *prima irruptio spiritus*. *St. Peter* was even now filled with the Holy Ghost, and so the first vent that it found, is in this sharp Reprehension. The Spirit was now at the fullest in *St. Peter*, and this is the first, and most kindly manifestation; he did not *oscitare in inanitate*, 'twas not for want of other matter: he did *eructare ex plenitudine*, as *St. Bernard* speaks. He was a new Bottle, filled with new Wine, and see he pours it out into the fores of these Sinners. This is the clearest evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit; as the Prophet *Micha* speaks, Chap. iii. 8. *I am full of power by the Spirit, to declare*

unto

unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sins. Are the Apostles filled with the Spirit? We look to hear of some new Revelations, and high Mysteries: no, the more inspired, the more earnest calling of men to repentance. The Spirit of Conviction, and Compunction, that's St. Peter's Spirit, Joh. xvi. 8. *When the Comforter shall come, he shall reprove the World of Sin.* A strange Office of a Comforter, to find fault, to reprove, and breed sorrow in men. Yes, yes, this course breeds the best comfort. Sound Comfort is built upon serious Repentance; sound Repentance, upon serious Conviction. This sorrow for sin, 'tis compared by Christ to the sorrows of a Woman in Travel; those sorrows breed joys. 'Tis not only joy after sorrows, but joy out of sorrow. *Dolet de peccato, & gaudet de dolore*, as St. Augustine expresses it.

3. Here is *exemplum benedictum*. This kind of dealing is warranted by the great success that God gave unto it. See, it ends in a wonderful Conversion; three thousand souls are wrought upon, and converted. Sensual men cry out of such Preachers. *What? will you drive men to despair? hurry them to Hell?* Vain men! 'tis the only way to bring them to Heaven. God hath given a full testimony to this Word of his Grace. Thousands have been gain'd to God by it. As St. Augustine reports of some Donatists; that, being brought from their Errours by the sharpness of the Imperial Laws, blessed God for that severity, that affrighted them into their wits, scared them into the Church again, from whence they had strayed. Here is a *Probatum est*, upon this bitter Potion, beyond all exceptions. Peter hath saved thousands with it, and Paul his ten thousands. This is to cast the Net on the right side of the Ship, as Christ directs Peter; he shall not miss of a plentiful draught. He that means to fish for Souls, let him bait his Hook with this Worm of Conscience, and he will take them presently.

That's the first particular of the Text; the means by which this perplexity was wrought. Now follows the

Second, The *Paroxysm* it self, the Anguish, and Compunction they were brought into; *They were pricked at their heart.* And of it take a double Consideration.

First, See the sharpness of it.

Secondly, Take notice of the goodness of it.

First, 'Tis exceeding Sharp: their soul is imbittered in them: all Comforts are turned into Gall, and Wormwood. The Scripture sets out this Compunction of spirit, in terms of Extremity, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. 'tis called a *smiting of the heart*: Prov. xviii. 14. *a wound of the spirit*: Rom. ii. 9. *tribulation, and anguish of Soul*: Psal. li. 17. *a breaking, and a contrition*; *A broken and a contrite heart wilt thou not despise*: not only broken, but even to Contrition. *Aliud frangi, aliud comminui, & conteri*; faith Aquinas. A thing may be broken, and soon set together again, and made all whole. Contrition breaks all in pieces, as Hezekiah did the Brazen Serpent, to dust, and powder; as a Potter's vessel is broken, faith Isaiah, *so that there remains not a sherd to take up fire from the hearth, or to take up water out of the pit*: that is, faith Parisiensis, the heart must be broken, that it be not fit to receive *igniculum tentationis*, or *modicum aque noxiæ voluptatis*; utterly unuseful for any wicked employment.

And 'tis the sense of God's Displeasure causes this breaking, by three Apprehensions, as by so many strokes.

I. As most deserved, and due to us. We eat the bitter fruit of our works.

II. As most heavy and unsupportable by us. *Who knows the power of his anger? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?*

III. As, of our selves, unavoidable by us. *How shall we flee from the wrath to come?*

A poor sinner, beset with these Anxieties, tortures himself with these pensive thoughts:

1. *Quid feci?* What have I done?

2. *Quid incurri?* What Danger have I run into?

3. *Quantum doleo?* How bitter are mine Anguishes?

4. *Quò vadam?* Whither shall I turn my self for ease, and comfort?

Not that every soul suffers the same measure, and degree, and sharpness of compunction; 'tis laid upon them, as they can endure it. Numb. xxxi. 23. 'twas the Law of

Serm. I. of cleansing, (the Type of Repentance) that which can endure the fire, shall pass through the fire; that which abides not the fire, shall pass through the water, and it shall be cleansed. All must feel these pangs of Repentance, yet some have more gentle and easie fits; others find, and feel more strong, and violent: as there is no Child-birth without Throws, yet some sharper to undergo, others more tolerable.

Ye see the bitterness of it; but,

Secondly, Consider the Goodness of these mens Compunction; and it will appear observable for our imitation in these four respects:

I. Their Compunction, 'tis the more observable, because it is wrought in them without the help, and concurrence of any outward affliction: only by the dint of St. Peter's Sermon. Look upon the Condition of these men; for any outward respect, all went well with them, no distress, or calamity lay heavy upon them. Indeed, when God's Hand is heavy upon us, in any sharp Visitation, may be, we will bethink our selves of our former courses, call our sins to remembrance, and sorrow for them. Affliction doth more easily quicken us to compunction. *Ipsa, sui acerbitate, provocat ad penitentiam*, saith *Parisiensis*. As the Brethren of Joseph, all the time of their prosperity, for many years, never bethought themselves of their Cruelty to Joseph: but, being in distress in Egypt, like to be imprisoned, and brought into bondage, then their hearts smote them: O, we have sinned against the life of our Brother, Gen. xlii. 21. So Manasseh, when he was carried Captive to Babylon, in his distress, being in fetters, he humbled himself, *the Irons entered into his soul*. When loss, or sickness presses us sore, we can then bethink our selves of our sins, and 'tis well 'tis so with us; but that's most kindly sorrow, that's wrought without such means, only by the power and evidence of the Word of God. As we count those ingenuous natures, that need no stripes to reclaim them; speak but an angry word, and ye melt them presently.

How hard are most mens hearts: the reproofs of Scripture are but Paper-shot, they are not affected with them. God must discharge some heavy judgments upon them, ere they stoop unto him. These men yield at the first summons, without siege, or battery, and come in presently. *In auditu auris, at the hearing of the ear, they shall obey*, Psal xviii. 44. It gives great glory to the power of God's Word, that it can subdue, and deject us when it comes alone, without the assistance of any outward affliction.

II. Their Compunction, 'tis the more observable, because wrought into them by the hearing of one Sermon of St. Peter; no sooner charged with Sin, but they are convinced presently, and cry out for sorrow. Not like Naaman, dipt seven times in Jordan, ere they can be cleansed; the first sprinkling of this water of Expiation forthwith recovers them. This should be the efficacy of our spiritual cures, as Chrysostome observes; not like weak Plaisters, renewed often, and shifted, ere the Cure be wrought; *sed, sicut Pharmacum semel impositum, semper sanat*, it soon hath its full virtue upon the first application. As Christ saith of the *Ninivites* The men of Ninive shall rise up in judgment, and shall condemn us; they repented at one preaching of Jonas, one reproof of St. Peter converts them instantly. *Line upon Line*, Message upon Message, and our Obstinacy yields not. What's this, but to resist the Holy Ghost? Acts vii. 51. *offer despite to the Spirit of Grace*? Heb. x. 29. to make God wait upon the hardness of our hearts? Happy Converts, whom one Sermon of Peter reclaimed! Happy Eunuch, whom one conference with St. Philip converted! Happy Lydia, whose Heart one Instruction of St. Paul opened! Happy Josiah, whom one Lesson of the Law softened, and melted! In these the Word of God had a kindly work.

III. Their Compunction, 'tis the more observable, as being wrought in them only by convincing them of Sin; not by threatening, or denouncing of Judgments. Survey St. Peter's Sermon, and there is no thundering out of Judgments, he flashes not Hell-fire in their faces; but only lays open the greatness of their sin, and they yield presently. Their hearts are like soft Wax, the heat of the Hand will supple it, and make it yielding, and pliant, without the heat of the fire. Servility, that's afraid of the Whip; Ingenuity is awed with a frown, shamed out of sin, rather than

fscared,

scared, or affrighted. Not, but that we have Warrant to denounce Judgments; we *have in a readiness to revenge all disobedience*, 2 Cor. x. 6. but yet that sorrow is more kindly, and godly, and best accepted, which the apprehension of *sin*, not the expectation of punishment, doth work into us. Serm. I.

IV. This Compunction is the more observable, because ye see, 'tis a full yielding to the accusation. St. *Peter* charges them with an horrid sin, and without more ado, they plead *Guilty* to all, confess the whole *Indictment*.

1. *Non recalcitrant*. They are not enraged against the Apostle for this sharp reproof, as those other Jews were against St. *Stephen*, upon the same accusation, Acts vii. 54. *When they heard this, they were cut at the heart*, (not with *Compunction*, but with *Indignation*;) and they gnashed on him with their teeth; and stoned him presently.

2. They take no Exception against the Accuser. "You speak partially, as men engaged in this business, you were his Followers, and Disciples, you plead your own cause, and may justly be suspected.

3. They make no defence of the Fact. "Call ye this *murder*? he had a fair, legal Tryal, Witnesses were produced, and examined, and so by course of Law, he was cast, and condemned.

4. They excuse it not. "If he were innocent, yet we did it ignorantly, we were misled by our Rulers, let them answer for it.

5. They *Demur* not. "They will consider better of it, there are those that can give an account of it; if not, then they will yield, and be sorry for it. None of all these shifts, but they accept of the Accusation; *Cum plectuntur, amplectuntur flagellum*, as *Gregory* speaks: they confess themselves guilty, and with sorrow of heart, acknowledge they are *murderers of the LORD of Glory*.

1. *Tanta vis verbi in ore Petri*: Such power, and such strength, was in the Word of God preached by *Peter*. His words are like sharp arrows in the hand of a Gyant, they return not empty. As 'tis said of *Paul*, and *Barnabas*, they so spake the Word, that multitudes believed, Acts xiv. 1.

2. *Tanta vis gratiae in corde populi*: Such prevalency hath the Grace of God in the hearts of this People. Like a Sovereign Antidote, that served to drive the poyson of sin from the heart, into the outward parts, by an open confession.

That's the second Particular of the Text, their Anguish, and perplexity: and it briefly affords us a threefold Meditation.

(1.) It lets us see the out-fall of Sin; the issue, and end of it is *sorrow*, and *vexation*: it may be sweet in the mouth; but it will be bitter in thy bowels. Thou, that makest a sport of Sin now, the day will come upon thee, when thine heart must bleed for it. Thou takest that down for a little pleasure, and delight of thy palate, which, if it prove not thy bane, thou must vomit up again, with the renting of thy bowels. Thou will find it an *evil*, and a *bitter thing to provoke the LORD*, Jer. ii. 19.

(2.) It shews the In-let, and first entrance of Grace: it begins with sorrow, and sharp Compunction. The first Physick to recover our souls, are not Cordials, but Corrosives: not an immediate stepping into Heaven by a present assurance; but mourning, and lamentation, and a bitter bewailing of our former transgressions. With *Mary Magdalen*, we must wash Christ's feet with our tears of sorrow, before we may anoint his head with the Oyl of gladness. When the Grace of God comes to dwell within us, 'tis Fear and Sorrow makes the forcible entry; though it be Faith, and Love, that keep the after-possession.

(3.) It shews us the down-fall of Despair. Are these Converts, whom God means Mercy to, thus sharply tortur'd? how bitter are their torments, whom he plunges into perdition? If *David's* Bones were broken; what was the rack of despairing *Saul*? If *Peter* wept bitterly; what an Hell do you think was in *Judas's* Conscience? *Quid patientur, quos reprobant; si sic cruciantur, quos amat?* saith *Gregory*. If the Sovereign Medicine of Repentance be so sower, and untoothsome; how bitter and loathsome is the poyson of Despair!

Serm. I.

We pass to the

Third Particular, That's the Course they take for ease, and remedy: they repair to *Peter*, and the Apostles, crave their help, and direction: *Men, and Brethren, what shall we do?* And this Course of theirs is qualified with three Conditions.

First, They take a speedy Course; as soon as the wound is given, and felt, they presently seek for help, and direction. *As in Bodily diseases*, saith *Chrysostome*, *Si quid morbi pulsaverit, statim Medicos adhibemus*: so these do in their *spiritual distempers*. They put it not off till some other time, as *Felix* did, when he felt the first shiverings, and grudgings of Contrition, *ὅταν ἰναρπίσω* when he hath more leisure, he will advise with *St. Paul*. Nor think they, that they shall out grow it in time; that their hearts are like good flesh, that will heal of it self. No, delays in this kind breed a double Danger.

I. There is Danger *nè evanescat dolor*: blow up the first sparks of Grace, least they go out, and die again. Good motions, if not cherished, and prosecuted, will vanish away, and then the heart grows harder. It is good taking the first advantages of the Grace of God; lose not these holy hints, and blessed opportunities. *To day hear his voice*; 'tis *hodie*, 'tis not *quotidie*: thou mayst never meet with the like opportunity. *Occasio est nutus Dei*.

II. A second Danger in Delay is, *nè nimis sæviat dolor*. Hath God prickt thine heart? take the Wound timely, least it grow worse. A Wound is best cured when 'tis fresh, and green; if it rankle, and fester, the Cure will prove harder. How careful was *St. Paul* to apply seasonable comfort to the sorrowful *Corinthian*? least his sorrow grow to horror, his horror to desperation. You that delay, and put off the checks of your Consciences, when they return upon you like an armed man, then this Truth will upbraid you, as *St. Paul* did the Mariners, *You should have listened to me*, that you might have saved these woful extremities. That's the first Qualification, it was a speedy Course.

Secondly, 'Twas an advised, and proper Course, they make choice of *St. Peter*, and the rest of the Apostles. And the Wisdom, shall I say? or the Happiness of this choice will appear in four Particulars.

I. They are *Spirituales Medici*; these are spiritual men, Physicians for the Soul. A wounded spirit cannot be cured, but by spiritual means. 'Tis not *David's Harp* will charm, or still this spirit of compunction, as sometimes it did *Saul's* frantick spirit. *If any be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one*, Gal. vi. 1. That Cure is proper to such men only: as *Augustine* speaks excellently, *Nihil adeo spiritualem virum demonstrat, ac alieni peccati tractatio*. He is a Physician of some worth, that can cure the Conscience; as they are rare Chirurgeons, not that can cure a wound in the outward parts, but that can heal an inward Ulcer, stanch a Vein that's broken, and bleeds inwardly. The World indeed hath *ἀνέσθνα φάρμακα*, some stupifying Medicines, as Mirth, and Company, or some busie employment: but such Plaisters, as these, do not cure; but hurt only, and skin over our wounds.

II. They repair to the Apostles; *Prius vulnerarunt*. Why, *Peter* was he that wounded them? best of all; none like him to cure, and recover them. What *Hosea* speaks of God, is true of his Ministers in a due subordination: *They have wounded and they heal us; they have smitten, and they will bind us up*. Sorcerers they say, that are hurtful, they cannot be helpful; they are two distinct employments in those devilish practices: but the Ministers of Christ are enabled with both powers; *binding and loosing*, imprisoning and enlarging. *St Peter* here is like the good *Samaritan*, ready furnished with Wine, and Oyl too; both with the wine of sharp Reprehension, and then with the suppling Oyl of comfort and consolation. Who so severe against the incestuous *Corinthian*, as *Paul* was? who so compassionate to ease, and relieve him?

III. They repair to *Peter*, and the rest; *Experti sunt*; they come to men of practice, and experience. These Apostles knew what it was to have a wounded spirit; these had crucified Christ, *Peter* had denyed him, the rest had forsaken him, and it cost them dear, ere they could be recovered. None like these, to direct their Conscience. They do it,

I. More

1. More skilfully.

2. More humbly.

3. More tenderly.

1. More skilfully. *Certius operatur expertus, quàm Artifex*, saith Aristotle truly. Experience finds out many precious Receipts, that all the meer Book-men in the World are but strangers to.

2. More humbly, *Consider thy self*, saith St. Paul; for thou mayst, nay, more than so, thou *hast been tempted*. We our selves are *ὑποτακτός*, subject to the same miscarriage; which will teach us to handle the sins of others without insultation.

3. More tenderly, and with greater compassion. They have felt the anguish of a broken Spirit, and they cannot but pity it. To what Butchers went Judas, when his heart was wounded? he goes to the High-Priest, *O I have sinned*. What comfort doth he give? *What's that to us? see thou to it*.

IV. There's yet a fourth Consideration, that encouraged their repair to Peter, and the rest of the Apostles; they are *Unanimis*, all here in a joynt consent, and concurrence of Judgment; *ἑμοθυμαδόν*. Peter was *Os Apostolorum*, what he had said before, the rest owned, and avowed, and no doubt will joyn together in the same prescription. They repair here to the whole Colledge of *Spiritual Physicians*; they all concurred in the Corrosive, and so in the Cordial. This joynt consent in our Spiritual Directories, 'tis a great encouragement to the People to entrust their Souls with us. When a sinner is *reproved of all*, and *condemned of all*; he will *fall on his face*, and confess, *God is in you*, 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

Multitudo Medicorum, dissention among Physicians breeds distraction in the Patients. 'Twas that the Heathen objected to the Primitive Christians, *We would be Christians, but we know not whom to follow: Quare non consentitis inter vos? Hoc est opprobrium Gentium*, saith St. Augustine: It was a scandal that hindred the Gentiles Conversion, and it still continues. When one mans Prescriptions are cried down by another, when we come to Moses his Case, *Sacrificamus abominationes Egyptiorum*: One man's Religion is another man's Abomination: such dissentions in Opinion, breed alienation in Affection, and often increase unto bitter Opposition.

That's the second, it was an Happy course.

Thirdly, It proves successful, *Men and Brethren, What shall we do?* It discovers a threefold effect, that this Compunction hath already wrought in them, to help forward their Conversion.

I. It expresses their *Censoriousness*. Before, they could scoff at the Apostles, censure them for Drunkards, the vilest imputations good enough to cast upon these *new fangled Christians*: But now, that their hearts are brought to Compunction, they give over censuring, fall to beseeching. A man truly sensible of his own sins, will have little list or leisure to censure, and judge, much less to reproach, and slander others. 'Twill make him judge himself, and condemn himself, and think worle of himself of all other men. As Paul did, "I am *minimus Sanctorum*, and *maximus Peccatorum*. How can that be saith Augustine; Paul was not so, and yet, saith he, he seemed so to himself; and the reason is good; because that, which stands in debita proximitate, ever appears, in justa magnitudine; that, which is near to us, and we fix our eyes upon, appears to us in its full magnitudē. Such were his own sins; he viewed them thorowly; but things more remote, and which we behold not with the same heed and attention, loose much of their proportion, he minded his own sins, not the sins of others. A censorious spirit was never a humble, or penitent spirit. A true Penitent knows most evil by himself, judges his own sins greatest, his own estate most dangerous, and forlorn. He sits alone, and keeps silence, saith Jeremy, *puts his mouth in the dust*, as a man confounded with his own Transgressions.

Peter, before his fall, thought best of himself, worst of other men; *Though all forsake thee, yet I will not*. After his Repentance, he durst not compare, much less prefer himself before others. Peter, *lovest thou me, more than these?* Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He fell before by a censorious Comparison, now he shuns,

Serm. I. and avoids it. And yet there is a generation of men, that place all their Religion in censuring others. *Omnibus malidicere; officium bonæ conscientiæ putant*, as Hierom speaks. *This is an Hypocrite, this a Reprobate, a third is a Time-server*; and so they sift and winnow other mens lives; as if *Lingua Petiliani*, were *Ventilabrum Christi*; as if their Tongues were the Fan to purge Christ's floor with. 'Twas Augustine's complaint of the Times he lived in, and 'tis too true of ours, *Temerariis judiciis plena sunt omnia*. David discovered this evil in his days, *Psal. l. 20. Thou fittest, and speakest against thy Brother, thou slanderest thine own Mother's Son*; and he prescribes the very same remedy to cure this humour, that's here in my Text, *I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee*. That, if any thing, will cure this corruption.

II. This Compunction and perplexity hath a second effect; makes them reverent, and respectful to St. Peter, and the other Apostles. *Men, and Brethren*; words of respect, and due acknowledgment. Before, they had a slight, and base Opinion of them; *These simple illiterate Galileans, Verse 7.* but now, in their distress, they are enforced to conceive otherwise of them, and to entreat them reverently.

God's Ministers are never in season with the world, till men come to distress and perplexity. In the time of ease, and jollity, a Minister is but a contemptible man; he, and his pains may be well spared. Thus, to *Jehu's* Captain, God's Prophet is but a *mad fellow*, 2 King. ix. 11. *Paul* to the *Athenians* seems but a *Babler*, Act. xvii. 18. Nay, *Festus* counts him frantick, and out of his wits. With most men, the *Clergie* is the only superfluous Profession, and may be best spared; they either hate them, or scorn them. Well; stay but till the spirit of sorrow come upon you, and then God's Ministers will be of some account. As men in times of Health care not for the Physician, nor all his Prescriptions; but, when Sickness comes, ye will honour the Physician, because of necessity. In your Prosperity, mock God, and his Ministers; What saith the Prophet *Hosea* of such? *I will return to my place, in their affliction they will seek me early*; then we shall hear of them. Thus the *Jews*, in prosperity, mocked, and persecuted the Prophets of God; but, in their distress, they wished them alive again, bewailed the loss of them: *We have no Prophets amongst us*, Psalm lxxiv. 9. *The Comforter that should comfort my Soul, is far from me*, said they in their Captivity, Lament. i. 16.

Well, he that despises, despises not Man, but God. While ye slight God, and your Souls, ye may slight God's Ministers. But when sorrows surprise you, and your hearts are wounded, then one leaf from the Tree of Life, to stanch the bleeding, will be precious to you. This is the honour of our Ministry, to be able to help in such helpless times. Then, your Consciences shall give Testimony to us, and say, *O, these are the Servants of the most high God; these can shew us the way to salvation*.

III. The third effect of this Compunction is, it makes them *Inquisitive*. *What shall we do?* Surely, 'tis the voice of *anguish* and *perplexity*. And the strength, and purpose of this Speech will appear in these three expressions.

1. *What shall we do?* 'Tis *vox Ignorantiæ*. They speak as men at a loss, they know not how to shift, which way to turn themselves; but they were men acquainted with the Law; nay, devout Zelots of the *Jewish Traditions*, Verse 5. and yet we see they are now to seek how to ease themselves in that great perplexity.

Whence arises this sudden amazement?

1. Was it from the *surcharge* of sorrow, that had overwhelmed their spirits, and darkned that light which was formerly in them? It often proves so. *Sic se habent mortalia corda, quæ scimus, cum necesse non est, necessitate nescimus*, saith Bernard. They cannot make use of what they formerly knew. In such Cases as this, the Soul refuses its own Comforts.

2. Or, is it not *αδυσία νόου*; It shadows out the *insufficiency* of the Law, to breed peace and comfort to us. It may perplex us; but it cannot quiet us: discover our Sins, but not remove them. The Law, saith St. James, is a *Looking-glass*, that can shew our spots, but not cleanse them. The Laver under the Law was made of Looking-glasses. *Speculum Legis* must be turned in *Lavacrum Evangelii*. What the Law discovers, the Gospel pardons.

3. Or, was it not *Vanitas ritualis Religionis*? They placed all their Religion in some outward Observations, without the life, and piety of inward Devotion. Rituals with Substantials are the beauty of Religion; but severed, and divided, will breed but cold comfort to us

2. *What shall we do?* 'Tis *vox docilitatis*; that's a second fruit of their Compunction; it makes them docible, and tractable, willing, and desirous to receive instruction. A contrite, penitent spirit, is ever a teachable spirit. Compunction bores, and opens the ear, makes it capable of direction. *Fear makes consultive*, saith Aristotle, and inquisitive, desirous of counsel, and better information. While our hearts are at ease, and our sins dare us not, Solomon tells us, we scorn the counsel of Wisdom, we will none of her instructions: but in the day of anguish, we will waite at Wisdom's doors, cry out, with Saul, LORD, what wilt thou have me to do? David's Petition will be then in season; *Trouble, and sorrow hath laid hold upon me, O teach me thy Statutes.*

3. *What shall we do?* 'Tis *vox promptitudinis*; that's a third effect of Compunction; it begets a readines to undertake any course that shall be prescribed for relief, and comfort.

In our ease, Heaven must fall into our laps, or we will none of it. If it puts us to pains, or cost, 'tis too dear a bargain for us to deal withal. Like Naaman the Syrian, we snuff at any troublesome condition, and fling off presently. What needs this going to Jordan? What needs these prayers, and fastings, and reading, and curbing of our lusts? But, when our souls are in perplexity, we will be glad to accept of mercy upon any Terms; we will take Heaven at God's price then. *He that means to go to Heaven, and Salvation, saith Chrysostome, will never stick at difficulties, nor question, Quid asperum in via? quid laboriosum?* No; Prayers, and Tears, and Alms, and Fastings, and all possible endeavours. "I will do any thing, Lord, I will suffer any thing to get Hell out of my Soul now, and to keep my Soul out of Hell hereafter."

O, consider this, ye that forget God, now, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.

Five

SERMONS

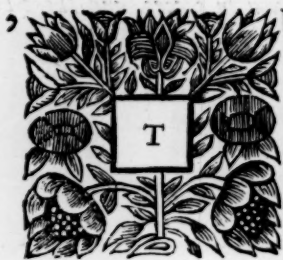
Preached on

EASTER-DAY.

The First Sermon.

I COR. xv. 58.

Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as you know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.



IS *Chrysostome's* complaint, and 'tis too true, that in the spiritual building of the Church of Christ, it often times fares otherwise, than in outward, and material buildings. Usually, as the Work-man leaves his work, so he finds it, when he returns to it; but, in the spiritual building of the Church, let it be put into a good forwardness; yet Satan, and his Instruments will be busie to set back, and pull down this holy work, and labour to destroy what before was builded.

That great Master-Builder, *St. Paul*, found this ill success in the Church of *Corinth*: in his absence, the Devil had not only defaced the beauty of this building by many disorders and indecencies in the publick worship; nor only disjoynted some parts of this Building, by raising up schisms, and dissentions amongst them: but he laboured to undermine the very Foundation, and to bring all to ruine, by corrupting, and falsifying those grand Articles of our Faith, upon which the Church of Christ is established: in particular, the Article of our *Resurrection from the dead*: it lies low in the very foundation; they, that destroy that Truth, overthrow the Faith, saith *St. Paul*, 2 Tim. ii. 18. *Fiducia Christianorum, Resurrectio mortuorum*, saith *Tertulian*. That assurance, that Christ is risen, and that we shall rise again, 'tis the pillar, and ground of our Christian confidence. And this great Mystery began to be questioned in the Church of *Corinth*; and therefore *St. Paul* lays on more cost for the settling of this Truth. Foundations require strength, and solidity. *St. Paul* disputes not now *de velando capite*, or *de decore in Ecclesia*: he is not ordering of some decent Rituals in the service of God: but now he reasons *de rei summa*, labours to preserve this most vital, and fundamental Truth; as, in a building, a lost Tile, or Battlement is not so carefully looked to, as is the preserving of the main foundation.

Now the Apostle having cleared, and proved this grand truth of our Resurrection, he labours in this Verse, and closure of the Chapter, to bring it forth to practice; that they should believe it stedfastly, and live accordingly. He strives

not

not only to lodge it in their heads, and there leave it; but he labours to work it into their hearts, and to make it bear sway in their lives, that they should both imbrace the Mystery, and practise the Piety of this holy Truth, and live as men that shall rise from the dead. And this he doth by this warm, quick, and affectionate Exhortation, which I have read unto you, *Therefore my beloved, &c.* Serm. I.

And this Exhortation

First, It hath an Introduction, and Preface to bring it in.

Secondly, Then follows the Exhortation it self.

First, The Introduction is briefly in these words, *Therefore, my beloved Brethren.*

And this Introduction puts a double edge upon the Exhortation to make it sink the deeper, and be more prevalent.

First, The first edge is in this word of Illation, or Conviction, *Therefore.*

Secondly, The second edge is in this winning word of Perswasion, *My beloved Brethren.*

First, He uses this word of Illation, or Conviction; *Therefore.* 'Tis a convincing Practice, and looks back, and takes in the strength of all its former discourse; and as a Burning-glass, it gathers, and unites all the rays, and beams of light, diffused, and scattered in the whole Chapter, and fastens them upon their hearts, to warm, and enflame them. As if he should say, and recollect his former Proofs of the Resurrection.

I. Doth Nature it self shew the possibility of it?

II. Doth the Resurrection of Christ prove the necessity of it?

III. Have so many Witnesses deposed for the Truth of it?

IV. Do we venture our lives in the preaching of it, and for the hope of it?

V. Is there such a crop, and harvest of glory to be reaped in the Fruits of it?

Consider, and ponder all these Arguments, and be not faithless, but faithful, and joyce in the comfort of it. *Credendum est Deo vel semel loquenti*, one word from God challenges our belief; much more, when he vouchsafes to argue, and prove, and dispute with our Faith, we must yield presently. The Apostle in this Chapter hath confuted all errors about it, answered, and assoyld all objections against it; these oppositions removed should make it more evident. As mists, and fogs, when the Sun hath dispelled them, make the clearer, and the hotter day: so Errors, soundly confuted, make the Sun-shine of Truth to be more resplendent. That's his first edge of the Exhortation, in this word of Illation, *Therefore.*

Secondly, Here is another edge, and enforcement of this Exhortation, in this word of perswasion, *My beloved Brethren.* There is much force in this Compellation, 'tis a word of affection, and of much wise, and holy, and Christian moderation. The men St. Paul writes to, were fallen into a great, and dangerous error, they questioned the truth of our Christian Resurrection: Yet see, with what meekness, and moderation he applies himself to them. He accounts them not enemies, but esteems them as Brethren: he calls them not Hereticks, denounces no curses, cuts them not off from the Communion of the Church; but labours to reclaim them in the Spirit of love, and Christian affection.

'Tis one thing to doubt of a Truth, another thing to deny it; 'tis one thing to be a Seducer, another thing to be mis-led, and seduced by others. *He that shall break one of God's Commandments, and teach men so*, hath an heavier doom belonging to him, than poor mis-led, and seduced Christians. *Hymenæus, and Alexander*, blasphemous Hereticks, St. Paul delivers them unto Satan, (2 Tim. i. 10.) but in meekness he instructs others, *If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the Truth*, 2 Tim. ii. 25. A good Shepherd deals otherwise with a destroying Wolf, than he doth with a stray Sheep: he hath his Mastiff to worry the Wolf; but for the stray Sheep, he seeks for that, and brings it home on his shoulders to the Fold again.

Of false Apostles and Seducers, St. Paul speaks severely; *I would they were even cut off that trouble you*, Gal. v. 12. but for the mis-led Galatians, how gently doth he deal with them? *My little Children*, saith he, *of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you*, Gal. vi. 19. Had the spirit of moderation swayed in the Church

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Church of Rome, there had not been such woful rents, and divisions in the Christian world: that proud Synagogue not enduring to have her own errors touched, nor yet vouchsafing to touch the errors of others with a gentler hand. Every truth with them, 'tis fundamental; every doubt with them, 'tis damnable. *Dubius in fide, est Infidelis*. I know there is a Truth in that saying; but not as they meant it, that were the first Authors of it. If any man scruple, or doubt of any thing that their Church teacheth, he must be presumed an Heretick, and accordingly punished. This is not *καταγριζω*, as St. Paul advises, *Gal. vi. 1. gently to set in joint again an erroneous Christian*. No, the Pope is a better Butcher, than a Bone-setter; little regarding St. Paul's direction, *Heb. xii. 13. Let not that which is lame, be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed*.

We have done with the Introduction; Come we now,

Secondly, To the Exhortation it self; and that aims at the strengthening, and establishing them in their holy Faith. And the Exhortation branches it self into three Particulars.

First, Here is an Exhortation *ad Radicationem Fidei*; he perswades them to the firm settling of the root of Faith: that in these words, *Be stedfast, and unmoveable*.

Secondly, Here is an Exhortation *ad Fructificationem Fidei*; when their Faith is strongly rooted downward, then he exhorts them, that it may bring forth fruit upward: that's in these words, *Always abounding in the work of the Lord*. And then, that this may be done,

Thirdly, Here is an Exhortation *ad Irrigationem Fidei*; to the watering, and cherishing of this root of Faith, that it may be fruitful: that's by assuring them of a plentiful reward, that shall be returned to them, *Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*.

Thus the Apostle exhorts the *Corinthians* to those spiritual Duties, which he highly commends in the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess. Chap. iii.* the Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope.

I. *Be stedfast, and immoveable*; that's the work of Faith.

II. *Abounding always in the work of the Lord* there is the labour of Love.

III. *Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*; there is the Patience of Hope.

Come we to the

First of these, that's *Radicio Fidei*, the firm, and strong settling of the root of Faith, *Be stedfast, and immoveable*. Two ponderous words, and very emphatical. And we may conceive them, either to signifie one and the same thing, the second serving to enforce the former, as the second blow to fasten, and rivet-in the Exhortation. Thus St. Paul speaks, *Ephes. iii. 17. rooted, and grounded in love*; and so likewise St. Peter prays, *Chap. v. 10. The God of all grace make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you*. Such ingeminations will make strong impressions in the hearts of the People. Or rather, we may conceive these two words, *stedfast, and immoveable*, to have their proper and peculiar purpose, and intendment, and to signifie two kinds of Graces requisite, and needful for the strengthening of our Faith unto all perseverance.

I. The first word is *Stabilitas*, stedfastness, and stability. *ἑδραιότης* signifies to be firmly settled upon its basis, and foundation: and so it imports that firmness and stedfastness of Faith, and full assurance, that is contrary to our natural inconstancy, and levity, and fickleness of perswasion; that same *ἀκυστασία*, that St. James speaks of, the wavering of our thoughts in matters of Religion, and our irresolution.

II. The other word is *Ἀμετακίνητος*. That signifies another Grace, to be immoveable; and that imports strength, and firmness of Faith against all outward assaults, that shall be made upon it, not to be stirred or removed from our holy Faith by any outward attempt that shall be used to unsettle our belief; not to be Reeds, blowed to and fro with every wind, but to be able to stand out all encounters; not to give place to any opposition.

So that these two, they recommend to us a two fold strength in our Christian Profession:

1. A strength of Consistence in our holy perswasion.
2. A strength of Resistance against any seduction.

The former requires a Christian to be *καταστατός*, *firmly settled*; the other requires a Christian to be *ἀσπικτατός*, *strongly entrenched*, against hostile impressions to be made upon him. The first exhorts us to keep our station firmly, for *by Faith we stand*, as St Paul speaks: the second exhorts to repel invasion stoutly, and to *fight the good fight of Faith*.

Come we to the

I. First of these, *Be stedfast*. And then the observation is briefly thus much: That *Fulness of assurance, firmness of perswasion is a necessary requisit in a true Believer*. The Scripture calls often and earnestly upon us for this strength of Faith. Our Saviour commands it: *Be not faithless, but believing*, Joh. xx. 27. He said it to St. Thomas, that questioned the truth of Christ's Resurrection. So (Mark xvi. 14.) he upbraided them with their unbelief: *Because they believed not them which had seen him, after he was risen*. How oft doth he check and chide his Disciples, for their staggering in unbelief? O ye of little Faith; wherefore do ye doubt? And as our Saviour commands it, so the Apostle exhorts to it, Heb. x. 23. *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering*. And so again, Col. i. 23. *we must continue in the faith grounded and settled, not moved away from the hope of the Gospel*. This the Apostle craves of them, Heb. vi. 11. *We desire you, that every one of you shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end*. And for this he prays to God, that he may attain to all riches of the full assurance of hope unto the end, Col. ii. 2. *For this cause, saith he, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit, in the inner man*, Ephes. iii. 14, 16.

And this strength of Faith, 'tis requisit in all the actions and functions of Faith. There are three acts of Faith, that shew themselves in three faculties of the Soul: and all of these require strength and firmness.

1. The first act of Faith is in the intellectual Faculty, our Understanding. There our Faith must have firmness of Assent; not questioning and doubting, *How can these things be?* No, if God saith it, a true Faith must presently assent to it. As Job answered God, *I know thou canst do all things*: Faith believes not only the probabilities of Nature, but that impossibilities of Nature are easie to God. Faith is an *ἐπιστάσις* not an *ἐνδοξασις*, a strong substance, not a weak supposal, not as Suidas defines it, *σφοδρότης τῆς ἐπιπίστεως*, a vehement surmise of what we believe. It puts not off God with *Is* and *Ands*, and such kind of surmises; but saith with St. Paul, *I know whom I have believed, and he is able to do it*. That's the first, the firmness of Assent.

2. The second act of Faith is seated in the Heart, and there this act of Faith must have a firmness of Reliance; reposing it self strongly upon the Promises of God, *trusting perfectly to that Grace which is brought unto us*. Such was the Faith that Philip required of the Eunuch, when he sued to be baptized, Act. viii. 37. *If thou believest with all thine heart*. This Assurance of Faith, 'tis compared in Scripture, to *building upon a Rock*. And a Rock implies τὸ ὑψηλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀκείρατον, as Chrysostom speaks, 'tis solid and inexpugnable. But then, to the making of a strong and stable building, 'tis not sufficient that the Rock be strong; but that the building be strongly wrought into it. Otherwise be the foundation never so rocky and firm, yet, if we set up the building lightly and loosely on it, and not work it firmly into the foundation, it may be shaken and ruin'd. This the Scripture calls the adherence of Faith: *My soul cleaves unto God*. 'Tis called *the embracing of the Promises*, Heb. xi. 23. 'Tis not *contactus*, but *amplexus fidei*; not a light touch, but a strong embracing.

3. There is yet a third act of Faith, which is exercised in the conscience: and that's an act of personal Perswasion of our own state, and condition. And this act of Faith must have firmness of Confidence. When the soul of a Believer is able to say upon good ground, *My sins are pardoned, my peace with God is obtained, my salvation is purchased by Jesus Christ*. This is not so much the act, as the effect of a justifying Faith; a comfortable conclusion drawn from the former reliance upon the Promise of God; when thy conscience doth testifie, *I believe stedfastly, therefore I trust I shall be saved certainly*. Paul calls this a *rejoycing in the hope of the glory of God*,

Serm. I. Rom. v. 2. This stedfastness of our Assurance will make us say with the Spouse in the *Canticles*, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.* *Dicat anima, secunda dicat, Deus meus es tu, ei, qui dicit animæ tuæ, Salus tua sum ego.* By this Faith, thy soul will say to God in an humble confidence, *Thou art my God*; and he will say to thy soul in a gracious assurance, *I am thy salvation.* This is not presumption, but a well-grounded confidence, without which, the soul of a Christian will still be distracted with fears and perplexities. As *Augustine* confesses of himself, *Timebam præcipitium, & suspendio necabar*: he feared to fall into presumption, and his Faith was stifled and strangled with doubtings. That's the first Qualification of our Faith, Stedfastness; that is,

1. Firmness of Assent to every Divine Truth.
2. Firmness of Reliance upon all God's Promises.
3. Firmness of Confidence of our Personal Interest, and that they are all made good to us.

II. Come we to the second Qualification of our Faith, to which the Apostle exhorts; that's *immobilitas*: our Faith must be immovable, able to withstand, and repel all contrary assaults, that shall be made against it. I told you these were two distinct abilities, to be *stedfast*, and to be *immovable*; the former provides against inward wickedness, the latter provides against outward force; the former dehorts us from a voluntary backsliding, that *there be not in us an evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God*, Heb. iii. 12, the latter warns us against outward seducements, that we be not *ἀνεμολύνηται*, carried about with divers and strange doctrines, Heb. xiii. 9. or as St. Paul elegantly expresses it, *Ephef. iv. 14. tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* St. Peter felt this assault, when he walked upon the Waters. His Faith served him to walk upon the Sea in a Calm, he had strength of Faith to enable him for that: but he began to sink in a Storm, when the Billows beat on him. And *Bernard* observes it in him, he could not endure that Christ should die; but he overcame that weakness, and was confident he could die with him: but yet, when danger approached, his Faith wanted this immobility. He was not *ignarus Mysterii*, but *pavidus Martyrii*: perswaded of the Truth, but not able to endure the oppositions against it.

Well, this immobility of Faith is no more than necessary. Oppositions will come and we must provide against them. We must strengthen our selves against the *contradictions of sinners*, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds, Heb. xii. 3. A Christian must provide not only for the edification of Faith, but for the fortification of it. Building indeed is *altæ pacis opus*, more seasonable for times of Peace: but entrenchments, and fortifications, they are provisions against war, and hostility, and a Christian must look for it. Faith, 'tis not only an house to shelter us, but a fortress to secure us; and God's grace is not only ornament, but armour. The Apostle tells of the *shield of Faith*, of the *sword of the Spirit*. Christians must build, as they did that repaired *Jerusalem* in *Nehemiah's* time; they had the trowel in one hand to strengthen the building, and a weapon in the other hand to repel the enemy. Christ counts it wisdom so to build, that we may endure, and stand out a Tempest. The wind will blow, the floods will beat upon our house: Paper buildings will not abide such storms and tempests, *Matth. vii.*

And for this shaking and subverting our Faith, Satan hath his several sorts of Winds.

1. He hath his winnowing Winds of Temptation.
2. He hath his tempestuous Winds of Terror and Persecution. We may reduce all his onsets upon our Faith to these three Heads;

1. He will play the Sophister, and endeavour *seducere fallaciis*, to beguile us with subtilities, and fallacies, and errors in Faith.

2. He will play the Cheater, and endeavour *abducere blanditiis*, to allure us with flatteries, and smooth insinuations.

3. He will play the Tyrant, and labour *frangere injuriis*, to force us out of our holy Faith, by terrors and persecutions.

1. The Devil hath his subtilities and fallacies, and false Doctrines to deceive us, *spirits of error* to corrupt the integrity of our Faith. He will tell us of new Lights, Doctrines,

Doctrines concealed from the Primitive Christians, reserved for these last times. St. Paul warns the *Corinthians* of this practice of Satan; *I fear least by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. There are *τὰ βάθη τῆς Σατανᾶς*, Rev. ii. 34. depths and whirl-pools of errors, into which he will plunge thee.

That thou mayst be immoveable against this assault, labour to be well grounded in the present Truth. Get thy wits exercised to be able to discern 'twixt Truth and Error. Ye must not be *children in understanding, ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth*. What saith David? *Be not like to Horse, and Mule, that have no understanding*. The Horse he is ready for every Rider; the Mule, that's ready for every burthen. But Christians should know what to believe, and from whom to receive it. Learn of St. Paul how to try, and reject these false teachers, 2 Cor. xi. 4. *If he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, that can shew you a more perfect Saviour, than our Church hath taught you; or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, gain more sanctifying, and saving grace, by their new ways, than what the Ordinances of God have already offered to you, and (if ye be true Christians) hath wrought into you; or, if they teach you another Gospel, which you have not accepted, a more blessed Doctrine, and way to Heaven, than you have been taught, ye might well bear with them: but this they cannot do, therefore listen not unto them.*

2. A second fetch to subvert our Faith by, is *abducere blanditiis*. Satan and his Agents have their allurements to entice, and with-draw us. The examples of Great Ones, that's a strong allurement. Thus the Priests, and Elders dissuaded their followers from listning to Christ: *Do any of the Rulers believe in him?* Joh. vii. 48. Or the throng of the multitude. Oh, 'tis best going that way, which the most walk in: else thou shalt be pointed at, and counted singular: what wilt thou swim against the tide, strive against the stream? Or the hope of Gain? that was *Demetrius* his advice, Sirs, you know, that this Religion brings in our gain to us, *Act. xix. 25*. Pleasures, Profits, Preferments are Satan's usual baits and allurements. The prevailing part of the World, when their net is full, they becken to others to joyn with them. *Come, say they, cast in thy lot amongst us, we shall find precious treasure*, Prov. i. 13, 14. *What? Can the Son of Jesse give you lands, and vine-yards, and make you Captains, and Commanders?* But we can. *My Son, walk not thou in the way with them*. Learn with *Moses*, to prefer the contempt, and rebuke of Christ, before the treasures of *Egypt*. Consider how great an indignity thou offerest to thy God, and thy Faith, to undervalue it at the price of these outward things. What is this, but to prefer Trash before Treasure, and Pebbles before Pearls, and precious Stones?

3. If these will not do, Satan hath a third assault, he will *frangere injuriis*, with injuries, oppressions, and persecutions. If allurements do not withdraw us; persecutions, he thinks, shall drive us away from our holy Faith. If *Nebuchadnezzar's* Musick will not entice us, his fiery furnace, that shall enforce us to fall down to his Idol. This stagger'd St. Peter's Faith; this made *Demas* forsake St. Paul; this made the *Galatian* Divines to comply with the *Jews* in their false Doctrine, lest they should suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ, Gal. vi. 12. But what saith Paul? *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified unto me*. He was mortified, not only to the allurements, but also to the threats, and terrors of the world. The love of Christ will subdue not only carnal hopes, but worldly fears. A sound Christian will condemn *quicquid delectat, & quicquid terret*. Neither delights, nor worldly spight shall prevail with him. His Faith will overcome *cuncta invitantia, cuncta minantia, cuncta cruciantia*, saith *Augustine*. Hopes, and fears, and torments, shall not overthrow his Faith. Such an one was St. Paul, a very crucifix of mortification. Come to a dead man, and entreat him, and offer him preferment, or threaten a dead man with pains, and torments, 'tis all in vain; he is dead to these things, they cannot move him. A sound Faith despises all these assaults, overcomes the world, *Cum omnibus amoribus, erroribus, terroribus*, as *Augustine* speaks? fallacies, flatteries, menaces, he is immoveable by any of these.

And that thy Faith may be thus immoveable, labour for two things, that will conduce to it.

1. Study for clear apprehensions.

U 2

2. Study

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1. Study for clear apprehensions.
2. For firm, and strong resolutions.

First, Get sound, and judicious apprehensions of what is to be believed, and then work thine heart to strong, and peremptory resolutions to cleave to it. Would a man walk steddily in his way? He must have two helps, light, and strength. A blind man is subject to stumbling; and a weak man is subject to falling. So it fares in point of Religion; ignorant men are dim-sighted, they easily stumble; and weak, feeble men, destitute of strength, they are subject to falling: but an understanding, and knowing Christian, a resolved, and strongly perswaded Christian, will stand firmly, walk stedfastly, neither fail, nor falter in his holy profession.

And to attain to these two, consider seriously of a double interest.

(1.) God's interest in the truth of Religion. Our Faith, and Religion, 'tis his *depositum*, 'tis that, with which he hath entrusted thee, committed it to thy keeping. *Καὶ τὴν παραθήκην. That good thing, which is committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, saith Paul to Timothy.* And *φυλακίδης* must be *ἀντιστατικός* he that will keep a precious thing safely, must guard it strongly. St. Paul would be sure to keep that pledge, though it cost him blows. *I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith;* he would part sooner with his life, than his God, and his Religion. That's God's interest.

(2.) Then consider thine own interest. The Truth of Religion, it nearly concerns thee; 'tis thy portion, 'tis thine inheritance, 'tis that, by which thou holdest all thy right, and claim to Salvation. Will a man lightly part with his inheritance; give up his right to what he possesses? be wrangled out of his Evidences, by which his Tenure holds? What saith David? *Thou art my portion O LORD; I have said, that I will keep thy Word; thy Testimonies have I claimed, as my heritage for ever.* Take heed of Esau's profaness, to part with thy birth-right to Heaven upon any terms.

We have done with the first Particular, *Radicatio fidei*, the setting, and strengthening of the root of Faith. Now proceed to the

Second, That's the fructification of Faith; *Always abounding in the work of the Lord.* The root of Faith must bring forth the fruit of Faith. We must not rest in the goodness, and firmness of the root, believe assuredly, and rest in that: but we must bring forth fruit. Faith, 'tis a foundation; 'tis not enough to settle a foundation, but we must add a superstruction, and raise up the building. Faith, 'tis a root, and he that plants a root, looks for fruit. 'Tis God's complaint, and controversy with his People, *I planted it with the choicest Vine, and I looked it should bring forth grapes,* and it proved *Hosea's* Vine, an empty Vine, barren and fruitless. What saith St. Peter? *Add to your Faith, godliness, temperance, patience, charity; for if these things abound in you, you shall not be barren, or unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,* 2 Pet. i. A Christian must not be like a Cypress tree, goodly boughs, but not any fruit. No, *Isaiah* tells us what trees we should be; *we must take root downward, and what then? spread abroad our boughs upward?* no, that's not all, *we must bear fruit upward,* Isai. xxxvii. 31. The Pelagians said of the Heathen men, that they were *steriliter boni*: good men, but yet unfruitful. St. *Augustine* tells them, *Nemo est steriliter bonus*; no good man is an unfruitful man. Faithful and fruitful must go always together.

And here we have three things.

- I. The kind and quality of the fruit; 'tis *opus Domini*, the work of the Lord.
- II. The measure and quantity of it; that's *plenty*, and *abundance*.
- III. The time and the season of this fruit, it must be *always*.

- I. The kind and quality of the work; 'tis *the work of the Lord*.

And this

- I. *Specifies the Work;*

(1.) In general, every holy work, and act of piety, the whole carriage, and ordering of our conversation aright, that's the doing of what commends us to God's acceptation, that's *the work of the Lord*. Whatsoever fulfils his will, whatsoever advances his Glory, that's a work, which God will own as his work: *Augustine* describes it, *Quicquid fit, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo*: whatsoever gives

us communion with God, that's God's work. But the Scripture is more particular in specifying this work.

(2.) Therefore embracing of Christ, and fixing our souls upon him, that's *the work of the Lord*, Joh. vi. 29. *This is the work of God, saith our Saviour, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* The habit, and grace of Faith, that's the root of Faith; but the exercise and employment of Faith, that's a fruit of Faith, and a *Work of the Lord*; so he esteems it. As 'tis with some plants, both root and fruit are good meat; such a plant is Faith in the soul of a Christian.

(3.) That Work unto which God particularly calls us, that's *the Work of the Lord*. God is the great Master of the Household, he sets us our tasks, he gives us our Talents, he points us out our work. *Paul* saith it to Servants, but 'tis true of all orders, and ranks of men in their faithful discharge of their personal Callings, *They serve the Lord Christ*, Col. iii. 24.

(4.) The furtherance and promoting, and advancing of the Gospel by all holy means, that hath a special Prerogative; that's called *the Work of the Lord*. *St. Paul* graces *Timothy* with this testimony, *he works the Work of the Lord, as I do*, 1 Cor. xvi. 10. *Epaphroditus* hath this commendation, that *for the Work of the Lord, he was nigh unto death*, Phil. ii. 30. And this 'tis not the duty of the Minister only: but every good Christian must, within the Compass of his Calling, be a true Labourer in this holy Work. See *St. Paul's* salutation to them at *Rome*; *Tryphena*, and *Tryphosa*, *laboured much in the Lord*. As the *Hebrew-women* wrought for the furnishing of the Tabernacle: so every Christian must, in his rank, and station, labour to promote this Work of the Gospel.

(5.) The Work of charity and compassion to the poor, the relieving and refreshing the bowels of poor Christians; that's in an eminent manner, *the Work of the Lord*. 'Tis a work, that God strictly commands, graciously accepts, bountifully rewards. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*, Heb. xiii. 16. They are sacrifices, special acts of service, and honour done to God. Should the *Corinthians* ask *St. Paul*, *What's the Work of the Lord*, which he exhorts them to; See, *St. Paul* tells them in the very next words following, 'tis the relief of the poor Saints; *Concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, so do ye*. Having in this Chapter acquainted them with their reward at the Resurrection, he presently sets them to this work. Shall you have such an Harvest? spare for no seed then; but sow plentifully. 'Tis Winter-corn indeed, and 'tis longest in the earth; but the increase will be great, no less than an hundred-fold. These Alms-deeds to the poor, are in a special manner, rewarded at the Resurrection. Feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, they are the works that shall be remembered at the Resurrection, *Mat. xxv*. So Christ assures us; bounty to the poor shall be recompensed at the Resurrection of the just, *Luk. xiv. 14*.

That's the first Use of this Demonstration. *The Work of the Lord*, it specifies the work.

2. It guides and directs the work, and gives a right aim to it; it must be done *as to the Lord*, in Conscience of his commandment, with an holy intention to serve him in it. A work may be materially good, as *giving of Alms*; but withal it must be intentionally good, upon a right aim and purpose: or 'tis not *the Work of the Lord*. As your Coyn must not only be good mettall, but it must have the right stamp, *Cesar's Image*, or 'tis no currant money. *St. Augustine* tells us, a work may be *officio bonum*, good in the Kind; *sed, ipso non recto fine, peccatum est*, and yet for want of a right aim and end, it will be sin to thee. And thus we may sin in doing of what in it self is good.

(1.) If we aim wrong, set up a false end to our selves: relieve the poor, but upon vain glory, *to be seen of men*, and to be magnified for it: that's aiming wrong.

(2.) If in doing good we aim right, but yet aim short; as to relieve the poor upon inferiour ends, to satisfy Law, or out of humane pity, or civil compassion; Thou aimest right, but too too short. In giving Alms, *Quotiescunque manum extendis, cogita Christum; Heir. ad Func.* Have an eye to God in it, that he may be glorified;

Serm. I. glorified; and then 'tis a work wrought in God, as our Saviour speaks, and he will accept it.

(3.) This Denomination, that it is a *work of the Lord*, dignifies our work, and puts value upon it. A work, in it self, may be mean and contemptible; but this Denomination doth raise the worth of it, that it is *the Lord's work*, done as to him, and to do him service. The gift of a *cup of cold water* is, in it self, but a sorry piece of charity: but given by a good Christian, and to a good Christian, for Christ's sake, and for his Gospel's sake, is highly rewarded. It matters not so much what we do, as upon what terms we do it. The Drudgery of a Bondslave, 'twas a course piece of work; but what saith St. Paul of it? *Do it to the Lord*, and it will amount to the reward of an heavenly inheritance, *Col. iii. 24.* David's answer to Michal, for his playing and dancing before the Ark, shews us how a mean action may be highly improved; *Feci Deo*, saith he, *I have done it to God*; that made it honourable, though otherwise contemptible. *Bonus ludus Davidis, quo Michal offenditur, & Deus delectatur*, saith Bernard. Let Michal despise it, it was done to God, and he accepts it.

We have seen the kind and quality of the Work. Now take notice,

II. Of the measure and quantity of it, 'tis called an *Abounding*. And the connexion of these two is observable; *steadfastness in Faith* and *fruitfulness in good works*. Certainty of Faith breeds not prophaneſs, but Holineſs. They that are most assured of God's love, are most studious, and laborious in all works of Piety. *Having these Promises*, saith St. Paul, *let us perfect holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Indeed, 'tis a strong Faith only that can make us laborious. 'Tis not life only, but strength, that fits us for labour.

So then the measure and quantity, that we must aim at, is *Abundance*. *Περισσος*, 'tis a word of a full sense. Take it in a threefold sense:

1. In a positive sense.
2. In a comparative sense.
3. In a distributive sense.

1. Take it in the positive sense: so it signifies *to abound, to be plentiful in good works*; not to content our selves with any stint or stay in goodness, but to encrease more and more. *Herein is my Father glorified*, saith Christ, *that you bring forth much fruit*, Joh. xv. 8. *abounding in the fruits of righteousness, which are to the glory and praise of God*. A Christian is a Tree planted in a rich soil, in the Garden of God, and God himself doth tend it, and cultivate it; how justly may God expect abundance of fruit from it? 'Tis the saying of the Roman Husbandman, *Qui fodit vineam, fructum orat*, he that digs his Vine-yard, desires fruit; *qui stercoret, exorat*, but he that manures it, doth importune for fruit: but *qui cedit, cogit*, he that dresses and prunes it too, enforces fruit. God doth all this to a Christian; how doth it become him to abound in fruit!

2. *Περισσος* carries with it a comparative sense, 'tis a word of exceeding. *Περισσος* is one that exceeds and excels; so should a Christian be in these works of Piety.

1. He must labour to exceed others in an holy emulation. Thus St. Paul provokes the *Corinthians* to be charitable to the poor, by the example of the *Macedonians*. He tells them of the forwardness of others, to stir them up to an holy emulation, 2 Cor. viii. And then,

2. A Christian must labour to exceed himself in an holy progress and improvement; not standing at a stay. We must not only with the Church of *Ephesus*, *do our first works*; but with the Church of *Thyatira*, *our last works*, must be *more than our first*, Rev. ii. 19.

3. *Περισσος* hath yet a further intent; conceive it in a distributive sense, and so it takes in all sorts of fruits; to be *abundant in every good work*, as St. Paul speaks. A Christian must be like the *Tree of life*, bearing twelve manner of fruits. 'Tis not for a Christian to be given to some one virtue only, and to neglect the rest; be a just man, but not merciful; or a temperate man, but not humble: No, a Christian must have a dexterity to all good works. What saith St. Paul to the *Corinthians*? *As ye abound in faith and knowledge, and utterance, so abound in this grace also*, 2 Cor. viii. 7.

The

The Spirit of God in a Christian is an universal Principle of all kind of graces; as original corruption is of all kinds of sins, *Gal. v. 10.* The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance. You may call them *Gad*, a company comes. Serm. I.

3. Here is the time and season for this abundance; that's *Always*. And that takes in the whole life and conversation of a Christian. It requires timely beginning, constant continuance, final perseverance; not to be idle, and begin late; not to be lazy, and go on slowly; not to be weary, and give over. 'Tis a great commendation Christ gives of the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Κακοπατίας καὶ κόπης* Thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted, *Rev. ii. 3.* In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, saith Solomon, *Ecclef. xi. 6.* As they say of the Husband-man's work, 'tis never at an end. My little Children saith St. John, 'tis the last time, *1 Job. ii. 18.* as if he should say, "Though ye be young, the world grows old; up, and be doing, lest night overtake you. In this Case, 'tis not with the fruitfulness of a Christian, as 'tis with the fruitfulness of Trees and Plants. Trees have their seasons at certain times of the year, when they bring forth fruit: but a Christian is for all seasons, like the *Tree of Life*, which brings forth fruit every Month, *Rev. xxii. 2.* Christ looked for fruit on the Fig-tree, when the time of fruit was not yet, *Mark xi. 13.* Why? did not Christ know the season for fruit? *Christus nesciebat quod Rusticus sciebat? quod noverat arboris Cultor, non noverat arboris Creator?* saith *Augustine*. Did not Christ know that, which every one knows, when fruit is in season? or did he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt he did it, to teach us, that Christians must always be fruitful: the whole time of life is the season for fruitfulness.

'Twere strange to see a Tree full of fruit in the midst of Winter. I will shew you a Garden of God full of good fruits in an hard Winter, *2 Cor. viii. 2.* the *Macedonians* deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality. Poverty, that's a Winter season. Who will seek Alms at a poor man's hand? Yet here we see extream Poverty, an hard Winter; and yet plenty of fruit, rich liberality. So, who would expect that poor labouring men should distribute to the necessities of others? Is this a season for such fruit? Yes? What saith St. Paul? *Let them labour with their hands that they may give to them that need*, *Ephes. iv. 28.*

Now, that this may be done,

Thirdly, St. Paul adds the last Particular in the Text; that *irrigatio Fidei*, the watering and cherishing of this root of Faith, that it may be fruitful; and that's the blessed hope of a plentiful reward: *Knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*

And here we have,

I. The Duty to be rewarded? that's *Our Labour*.

II. The Reward and Recompence promised? 'Tis *not in vain*.

I. We have the Duty to be rewarded. We have two words in the Text:

I. *Ἔργον*, Work, Christianity is no idle profession. This promise is not made to *idlers*, to their knowing; but to their doing and working. He saith not, "You shall not know in vain, but you shall not labour in vain. The Servant that knows his Masters will, and doth it not; his knowledge shall aggravate his sins, multiply his stripes, increase his torments. His knowledge shall prove not only vanity but vexation also. *If ye know these things; blessed are ye if ye do them.*

2. *Κόπος*, Labour. The Duty is not only work, but labour. Christianity then is no easie profession? and that not a lighter kind of work, but toilsom labour. 'Tis not *ἔργον*, but *κόπος* in the Text; that signifies hard and painful labour, to bear the heat and burthen of the day: Not only to put to the hand to some easier works of Christianity; but to stretch out the arm, to bow the back, and put under the shoulder to the work, burthensome, laborious works of Piety. Such as will serve the Lord with all their strength, such kind of labourers shall not fail of a reward. Such were the *Macedonians* in their charity to the poor; they did it *κατὰ δύναμιν*, nay, more than so, *ὥστε δύναμιν*, saith St. Paul, *They did it to their power; nay, I bear them witness, beyond their power*, *2 Cor. viii. 3.* Such an one was *Epaphroditus*, who regarded not his life for the work of Christ. *Phil. ii. 30.* To such kind of labourers saith Christ: *Great is your reward in Heaven.*

II. See



Serm. I.

II. See the Reward; 'Tis not in vain. The Speech 'tis a *λετός* less is said, but more is meant. You shall not lose your labour; nay, that's not all, you shall gain abundantly by it. *He, that sows plentifully, shall reap plentifully; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall be given unto you.*

But yet the Apostle to good purpose, uses this expression, 'tis not in vain. It sets out

1. The Apprehension of a Christian.
2. The Wisdom of a Christian.
3. The Satisfaction of a Christian.

1. This Expression, *Your labour is not in vain*, sets out the Apprehension of a Christian, what his thoughts are of his future reward, what he conceives of it. Sure, 'tis beyond the comprehension, or imagination; how great it is, and how glorious we cannot say. Only this we are sure of, we shall one day enjoy it. *Our labour shall not be in vain. Acquiri potest, æstimari non potest*, Aug. We shall attain to it: but we cannot now fully comprehend it. St. John rests in this; *It doth not appear what we shall be, but this we know, we shall be like him*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. *When I awake*, saith David, *I shall be satisfied with his likeness*, Psal. xvii. 15. 'Tis enough that he employs us, we serve a good Master, rest in his words. *Matth. xx. 4. Go, work in my vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you.* Ask not what he will give thee, leave that to him; 'tis enough, he promises, we shall not labour in vain. It cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive what our reward shall be. We may wonder at it with David, *O how great is thy goodness that thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* 'Tis laid up; both *reconditum*, kept in store, and *absconditum*, kept in secret. But this we are sure of, we have Christ's word for it, *Matth. x. 42. We shall in no wise lose our reward.*

2. This expression, sets out the Wisdom of a Christian; he *labours not in vain*. 'Tis folly and madness to spend one's strength and labour to no purpose, for *that which will not profit us*, bring us no advantage. But a good Christian shall eat the fruit of his labour; he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied with it. *Audite, filii Adam, genus laboriosum, & infructuosum*, saith Augustine. *Hear it ye Sons of men, who labour so much to so little purpose.* Sore are the labours, restless are the projects of worldly men: but here is their folly, *They labour for the wind, and they reap the whirl-wind.* This made Solomon hate all his labours, which he had taken under the Sun, because all was vain, and there was no profit in them. And he might have spared his labour in finding this out, he might have learned it of his Father. David could have told him, *Man walks in a vain shadow, and disquiets himself in vain.* But here is the Wisdom of a Christian, he deals in a Trade of certain advantage. He is a Wise Merchant, he trades for precious pearls, *Matth. xiii.* His pains are great, but his gains are answerable. *Gemit in labore, sed gaudet in fructu.* The threshing-floor requires the pains and labours of the field. Think well on this point, and ye will say that a Christian's Wisdom excels the Wordling's folly, as much as light excels darkness; as much as substance and solidity, excels emptiness and vanity.

3. *Your labour is not in vain*, it sets out the Satisfaction of a Christian, and what he rests in. The day of payment, 'tis a long day; 'tis not till the Resurrection. Here is the Satisfaction a Christian gives to himself; it is not lost labour to be a good Christian, if he may reap the fruit of his labour at the Resurrection. Nay, more than so, all other labour is lost labour, but that which shall be rewarded at the Resurrection. The rewards of this life are unworthy rewards for Piety and Religion. *Æstimant fidem pretio vilissimo, bono temporalis*, saith Augustine: they debase their Religion, that value it no higher than at the rate of temporal blessings. And as such rewards are unworthy, so they are uncomfortable rewards, such as will soon fail us, and leave us destitute. 'Tis good to receive our reward then, when we may enjoy it, and not before. And then only we can enjoy it, when we can never part with it. Thou wouldest receive thy reward now, and be happy today; but, thou Fool, this night will mar all the jollity of this day. 'Tis a bitter exprobration to be called Fool by God; especially at the latter end to be called a Fool. Surely Heaven was never meant, or made for Fools. And such are all they that would have their Heaven here, and have none hereafter.

A thrifty Labourer asks but meat and drink for the present; let his wages stay till his work be done: So saith a good Christian, Lord, supply me with necessities here, but reward me hereafter. As *Chrysostome* saith, they that put out their money to use, are sorry to have it paid in too soon; the longer it is lent, the more profit it brings. Thou that wouldst have thy reward here, What wilt thou do at that great day of payment? when other mens hands shall be full, thine shall be empty. 'Tis a poor requital, that Christ gives to such men; *Verily, I say unto you, Thou have your reward.* And 'tis a sad answer, that *Abraham* gives to the Rich man, *Luke xvi. 25. Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and didst rest in them; now they are spent and gone, and thou hast nothing left to ease thy misery.* If God deals more sparingly with thee here, be of good comfort. What he keeps from thee, he keeps for thee. If he gives thee not a *Kid to make merry with thy friends*; mark what he saith, *All that I have, is thine*; Heaven and Glory, and Immortality, and let that satisfy thee.

Contemnit presentia solatio futurorum, St. Hierom.



ON EASTER-DAY.

The Second Sermon.

Hebrews xiii. 20.

Now, the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, &c.



HIGH Words carry with them the form and purpose of a Devout Prayer. And Prayer, 'tis the usual closure, and conclusion of *St. Paul's* Epistles to the Churches, the solemn Testimony of his love, by which he seals up his affection to them. And if we observe the method, and order of his writings, we shall find them to move, and turn upon these three Hinges.

First, *Docet*, He teaches, and instructs them in some needful, saving Truths to be believed. So he doth the *Hebrews* in this Epistle; he settles and grounds them in those high points of Christ's Priesthood, and Mediation, and the fulfilling, and abolishing the Law of Ceremonies, by his Death and Passion.

Secondly, *Hortatur*; Having planted the truth of Doctrine in matter of Faith, he waters it with Exhortation to a firm Profession, and holy Practice suitable to that Doctrine, to which they have been delivered. That's a second passage in this Epistle.

Thirdly, *Precatur*; He winds up all, both Doctrine and Exhortation, with a Religious and Fervent Prayer for them. He knows, planting by Instruction,

Serm. II. and watering by Exhortation, will be unsuccessful; except Prayer obtain an increase from God. Instruction, Exhortation, Prayer, are the three main Duties, and Functions of him that will approve himself (as St. Paul was) a faithful servant in the House of God.

That's the first observable in the Text, *Orat.*

Secondly, *Mutuo orat*; that's a second Observable Consideration in this Prayer of Paul, 'tis a mutual Prayer. In the two former *Verses*, he craves their prayers for himself, *Brethren, pray for us*, Ver. 18. He desires the assistance, and benefit of their Prayers. The greatest Apostle may stand in need of, and find good in, the prayers of the poorest Christians. St. Paul reckons of them, and sets much by them. And see how he requires that fruit of their love. What he requires of them, he performs for them; he prays for them again. Here is the happy Communion of Saints; here is the sweet harmony, and agreement of Pastour and People; here are the mutual engagements of Love and Charity, for the good of each other. Such strong combinations of mutual prayers are forcible and prevailing means to bring down blessings. That's the second, *Mutuo orat.*

Thirdly, *Appositè orat.* The Prayer he makes, 'tis a most proper, and seasonable, and pertinent Prayer. If ye look to the contents of this Prayer, and the several ingredients of which 'tis framed, you shall find it a sweet recapitulation, and summing up of all his dispute and discourse in this whole Epistle.

First, He hath proved Christ to be the great High-Priest, and chief Pastour of the Church.

Secondly, He hath proved him to be the great, and only Propitiatory Sacrifice for the pardon of our sins. It was his blood, not the blood of the Jewish Sacrifices, that could work that for us.

Thirdly, He hath proved the Covenant of the Gospel to be the only Covenant of salvation. The Covenant that Moses made, was but temporary, this of the New Testament is eternal.

Fourthly, He hath proved, that the sprinkling of the Blood of Christ only can purifie, and sanctifie the Conscience. All the legal Ceremonies, and Rites of Purification were insufficient to cleanse us spiritually. Now, see how sweetly he sums up all these Truths in this holy Prayer, *The God of Peace, that brought—*

First, This Prayer acknowledges him to be the great Shepherd of the sheep, there is his High-Priesthood.

Secondly, He was brought from the dead by the God of peace; there by his Death, he hath pacified God for us.

Thirdly, He hath wrought this by the virtue of the Everlasting Covenant; there is the Ceremonial Law abolished, and the Gospel established.

Fourthly, By the Blood of the Covenant, we must be sanctified, and made fit for every good work. That's the efficacy of his Blood, to purge our Consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. Thus you see, this Prayer is a full, and sweet comprehension of his former Doctrine, and a great confirmation of the Piety and holiness of it. 'Tis a good Character of Truth, when we can pray that which we preach. *Sicut credimus, sic & oramus*; as we believe, so we pray; and *legem credendi facit lex orandi*; our Prayers are real professions, and protestations of our Faith. Thus Augustine argues in matters of grace, and Conversion; God doth it, because the Church prays him to do it. He confutes the Pelagians by the set forms of Prayers established in the Church. It were mockery of God, to pray him to do that, which we can do our selves without him. 'Twas the wisdom of the ancient Church, to compose not only Sound and Orthodox, but Holy and Devout Confessions of Faith; as that of Ambrose, and Augustine, and that heavenly Hymn, *Te Deum*. They comprised the Articles of their Faith into those pious Forms. The Faith of the Trinity, of Christ's Divinity and God-head, were framed into their Doxologies, and Forms of Thanksgiving; and 'tis a winning and persuasive way to believe these Truths, thus to pray them into the hearts of God's People: they composed Hymns and Psalms, to convey these Truths with delight unto them: they summed them up in their Episcopal Benedictions, and Blessings of the People, as St. Paul doth here

He sets the seal of these Truths upon their Consciences, in this devout prayer for them, and Benediction of them. Serm. II.

The *Text* then you see, 'tis St. Paul's charitable, and devout Prayer, his Apostolical, and Fatherly Benediction, and Blessing of the *Hebrews*.

And in it we may observe these two Particulars:

First, The Original from whence he seeks this Blessing for them.

Secondly, The Blessing it self he wishes to them.

First, The Original of this Blessing is in the former *Verse*. And in it there are two things considerable:

First, The Person, and Author from whom he craves it; that's *the God of Peace*.

Secondly, Upon what motive, and inducement he seeks to obtain it; that's the consideration, and interposing of Christ's Resurrection; *His being brought from the dead again*. Then follows,

Secondly, The blessing it self he wishes to them, in the following *Verse*: and that's *fruitfulness in all good works, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise of God*.

The *First* thing observable, is the Person, and Author, from whom he seeks, and craves this Blessing of Grace and holiness for them; 'tis from *the God of peace*. 'Tis true indeed, God is the only Fountain, and Original of all grace; *The Lord will give grace, and glory*, saith David, Psal. lxxiv. 11. The Springs, and Well-head of grace are in Heaven, and from the God of Heaven. St. James tells us, that (*Chap. i. 5.*) *If any man lack wisdom, (or any other grace) let him ask it of God*. 'Tis an error, and a dangerous error, to think we may obtain it any other ways. James bids us take heed of that error, that we mistake not in this point: *Err not my dear Brethren, every good gift is from above, and comes from the Father of lights*, *Verse 16, 17*. The receiving of grace, St. Peter calls it a *partaking of the Divine Nature*; and none can make us partakers of that, but God himself. True, but yet the expression of the Apostle is very considerable, which he here uses. He names God with this Addition, *The God of Peace*.

And then the Enquiry will be; Why doth he insist in that Attribute of God, that he is *the God of Peace*, above all others, when he prays to him for grace for his People? Many other Excellencies and Attributes, God hath ascribed to him in Scripture, and the interposing of them in our prayers would seem very pertinent, and useful, for the obtaining this great blessing of Grace and Sanctity.

I. The Scripture terms him *the God of Power*; and the blessing he sues for, 'tis a work of great power, to sanctifie, and fit such sinful creatures as we are, to every good work. 'Tis his *Divine power*, saith St. Peter, *that gives us all things, that pertain to life, and godliness*, 2 Pet. i. 3.

II. The Scripture terms him *the God of Grace*; and this work, 'tis a gracious work. This Prayer, 'tis a Petition for Grace; and so St. Peter frames it accordingly, 1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of all Grace make you perfect, strengthen, and establish you*.

III. The Scripture terms him *the God of Glory*; and this work we are about, the work of Sanctification, 'tis a glorious work. St. Peter calls it *the Spirit of Glory*, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Yet we see the Apostle passes by these Titles, and Attributes, and insists upon this other, improves this to his purpose, *The God of Peace*, as most proper, no doubt, and pertinent to what he aims at.

I. In general;

(1.) The aim, and drift of the Apostle, in this Epistle, is to compose all jars, and differences of Opinion in the Church of the *Hebrews*. Many bickerings were amongst them concerning *Moses*, the *Law*, *Circumcision*, and *Sacrifices*. Saint Paul insinuates thus much by this expression; that these dissensions ill become the servants, and worshippers of *the God of Peace*. *God is not the God of Confusion, but of Order*; he is not *the God of dissension*, but *the God of Peace*. He is called *the God of Peace*, and he hath called us unto peace, 1 Cor. vii. 15. Our *High-Priest* is the *King of Salem*, that is, *the King of peace*, Hebr. vii. 2. He requires us to follow the *Truth in peace*, to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Ephes 4. 3. Peace, 'tis the high and honourable Title of our Master; the choice Livery, and

Serm. II. Cognisance of us his servants. Peace, 'tis both our Badge and our Pledge: our Badge, by which we shall be known to be Christians; *Hereby shall all men know us to be his Disciples*: and 'tis our Pledge, by the retaining of which, he will own us hereafter, if we be found of him in peace.

(2.) He prays for Grace from *the God of peace*; because, in truth, all Grace flows from this, that God is become a *God of peace* to us. While he is an angry, offended God with us, there is no hope to receive from him any gift of Grace. As *Jehu* answered *foram*, that enquired for peace; *What peace can there be, while such sins remain?* so may we say, *What Grace can be hoped for, while there is no Peace?* His holy Spirit, 'tis the gift of his Love, the fruit of his Peace, and Reconciliation: *Amor, primum donum, à quo reliqua fluunt*; the Peace and Love of God, is the first savour, from whence all other favours flow. First, God becomes the *God of Peace*, and then the *God of Grace* unto us. The *Roman* story tells us of a bold Senatour of *Rome*, that railed openly upon his Sovereign Lord *Augustus Cæsar*, and next day begging his pardon, and obtaining it of the Emperour, he forthwith craved of him a very great gift; adding he should then be assured, that he had really pardoned him, if he would bestow such a gift upon him; and he had it accordingly. 'Tis so 'twixt God and us; the gift of Grace, 'tis the great ratification of our peace with him. Thus *Paul* expresses it, *1 Thess. v. 23. The God of peace sanctifie you throughout*. *St. James* his speech 'tis true in this sense also: *The fruit of righteousness, 'tis sown in peace*. If God become to us *the God of Grace*, then will he become to us *the God of Peace*. Sue for Pardon, and Peace first, and then his Grace, and Spirit, all that belongs to life, and godliness, shall be made good unto thee.

(3.) This Title, and Denomination of *the God of Peace*, carries with it a third intimation, and that is of a necessary qualification, that is requisite in us for the receiving of this grace, *St. Paul* prays for. He is *the God of Peace*, and bestows his Grace where he finds his Peace. Such, as follow peace, the grace of God follows them, and enters into them. If there be a *Son of Peace*, the blessing of Grace shall rest upon him. A peaceable spirit invites the Holy Ghost to enter into us, and to abide with us. This Heavenly temper fits us for the meet receiving of all other Graces. It makes our hearts *subactum solum*, a fit soil for the seed of Grace. God will not sow the precious seed of his Grace among briars and thorns: such are all those that are enemies to peace. Wrath and contention drive away the spirit of Grace: Peace, and Love doth bring him home to us. We read in *2 King. iii.* that *Elisba* being transported with anger, and indignation, he called for Musick, to calm, and compose his passion, and so to fit him for the holy Motions of the Spirit of God. Sure, a peaceable Spirit is to a Christian, as that Musick to *Elisba*; it fits, and frames us for those heavenly illapses of God's Spirit into us. The ordinary coming of the Spirit upon us, 'tis answerable to his first extraordinary coming upon the Apostles. How were the Disciples then disposed? Were they quarrelling, or contending? no; 'tis said, *Acts ii. 1. They were all, with one accord, in one place; ὁμοθυμαδὸν all of one mind*: then they received the gifts of Grace. As *David* speaks *Psal. cxxxiii. 1. Where men dwell together in unity, there the Lord commands this blessing* for ever. The *God of Peace* bestows his Spirit where he finds Peace. Oh, a meek, and a quiet Spirit is, in God's eyes, of great price, much set by, *1 Pet. iii. 4.*

But, besides these more general Considerations,

2. This Title, of *the God of Peace*, hath a more close reference to the Text, to the purpose of it, and to all the parts of it:

(1.) It hath a reference to *Sanguis*, to the Blood here mentioned, and to the great Shepherd's Death. And it refers to that, as to the main ground, and foundation, and purchase of this peace. Indeed, this was not a primitive, original peace; but a purification, a restoring of Peace when 'twas lost. We had all of us broken our Peace with God, and he became our Enemy; and that called for blood-shed, and death: Blood, and death, betoken wrath, and heavy displeasure. And that was the case, 'twixt God, and us. His wrath, and just indignation called aloud for our death; nothing else could content him, or give his justice full satisfaction. Now because Christ became our Surety, and would interpose himself 'twixt God and us;

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the stroke of God's anger lighted upon him, shed out his blood, and laid him for dead. By that precious death, and blood-shed, God's wrath was appeased, and satisfied, and a full recompense was made for our offences. Serm. II.

The chastisement of our peace fell upon him; saith Isaiah, liii. 5. and by it our peace was purchased. God's anger slew him, caused him to die; and his death, it slew hatred, abolished enmity, *Ephes. ii. 15.* and so God is become a *God of peace* unto us. His blood-spake better things for us, than our sins could speak against us. God smelt a sweet savour of rest in the death of Christ, resolved never to be angry with us more, but to establish a perfect peace with us. That's the first reference, that this Title of *Peace* hath; it looks to Christ's death, and blood-shed, as to the main ground, and foundation of it. Through this blood, he is become a *God of peace*. His blood is the price, and purchase of our peace.

(2.) A second Reference of this Title of *the God of Peace*, is to another passage in the Text; that's *Reduxit*. It refers to the bringing of Christ back from the dead again, as the proper effect, and fruit of this Peace. God being now at peace with us, he brings Christ back from the dead. When Christ was brought under the dominion of death; that was the bitter fruit of God's fierce anger: but the restoring, and bringing him back again to life; that's the sweet, and blessed fruit of his Peace. In his anger, he arrested Christ, our Surety, clapt him in the Prison of Death, laid, and charg'd all our debts upon him. Now, that Christ hath satisfied the utmost Farthing, now, in his Love, he enlarges him, brings him out of the holds of Death, lifts up his head, sets his throne above all other thrones. As *Joseph*, in his just displeasure with his brethren, bound *Simeon* as a pledge for his brethren, and imprisoned him; then, being satisfied, he brings forth *Simeon*, enlarges him again, and receives them to favour: So Christ having paid our debt, made up the breach, appeased the unkindness, satisfied the injury; now, our Surety is enlarged, our Bond cancelled, and our Peace restored. The day of Christ's Resurrection, 'twas the first dawning, and sun-shine of this peace. See how Christ imparts this peace, as the main attendant of his *Resurrection*. At his first appearance to his Disciples, after he rose again, his first salutation to them is, *Peace be unto you*, *Luke xxiv. 36.* He assures them, that now God is become their God; *I ascend to my Father, and to your Father, to my God, and to your God.* That's the second Reference to *Reduxit*, Christ's Resurrection, that's the immediate fruit of this peace.

(3.) There's a third reference of this Title of God, *The God of Peace*; and that's to *Pastor ovium*, the *Shepherd of the Sheep*. It refers to that, as to a great evidence, and token, that now he is indeed at peace with us. For he hath not only restored Christ to Life, but restored him to his office too, committed to him the care, and custody of his flock again. When he smote this Shepherd, the poor sheep were scattered. His first anger, like a *Wolf of the evening*, all to tare this Shepherd, worried him to death. Now, being at peace with us, he sets him *in statu quo*, makes him a Shepherd again with a compleat flock. As *Joseph* interpreted the Butlers dream to him, *Gen. xl. 13.* *Within three days Pharaoh shall lift up thy head again, and restore thee to thy place:* So this *God of peace*, within three days, raised up our dead Shepherd, and restored him to his Office. See how our good Shepherd comes back, this day with his sheep on his shoulders. As *Jacob* made his thankful confession to God, *Gen. xxxii. 10.* *In hoc baculo, with my staff passed I over this Jordan, in fear, and sorrow; see now, I return with flocks and herds;* So Christ, *in baculo crucis*, with his staff of the Cross, waded through the swelling of *Jordan*, and the torrent of God's wrath; see now, he returns in peace, with his flock, his *beautiful flock*, as the Prophet speaks.

Indeed, the very Trade, and employment of a Shepherd is an Emblem of *Peace*. When the King or *Israel* was slain in the wars, the people were as *sheep* having no Shepherd, (a sad condition of war!) but *peace*, 'tis a season for *Shepherds*; then their trade prospers. God foretells this, as an evidence of *Peace*: *The flocks shall lie down in peace, in sure pastures. I will set over them one Shepherd,* (speaking of Christ) *and I will make with them a Covenant of peace, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods,* *Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 25.* That is a third Reference to *Pastor ovium*.

(4.) There

Serm. II.

(4.) There is yet a fourth reference of this Title, of the *God of Peace*, and that is to *fœdus æternum*, to the Everlasting Covenant, that the Text speaks of. And so it refers to it, as to the great assurance, and confirmation of Peace. He is the *God of Peace: Covenants*, you know, are Acts, and Instruments, and Ratifications of Peace; for he hath granted to us, now, a Charter of Peace, and cessation from Hostility; a peace, to last, and continue; *Covenants* are engagements for peace, and amity. Here is a strong confirmation of peace. God is now become a *God of peace* to us; because he is become a God in Covenant with us. Nay, 'tis not only a lasting, but an everlasting peace. He hath bound himself to maintain this Peace by an Everlasting Covenant; he hath established a Peace, that shall never be broken. Hear what God saith of this Covenant, *Isai. liv. 9, 10. This is as the waters of Noah to me; for as I have sworn, that I will not be angry with thee,——The mountains and hills shall be removed,——but the Covenant of my Peace shall not be removed.*

Nay, 'tis not only the peace of a Covenant, though that be strong; but (as one renders the word; as you find in the Margin of your Books) *the peace of a Testament*. We read of the *quarrel of God's Covenant*, *Lev. xxvi. 25.* that may meet with jars: but, when peace becomes a Legacy, a firm Deed, and Bequeathment, that's unalterable; we shall inherit Peace. Peace, and Safety, 'tis *the heritage of the Lords servants*, *Isai. liv. 17.*

And for our greater assurance, he hath erected a publick Office in his Church, where we may view, and exemplify this Covenant, take out a true, and a perfect Copy of his last Will and Testament; and that's in the institution of the *Sacrament*. Here we may sue out our *pardon* for the breaches of this Covenant: here we may renew our *Charter* and confirmation of this Covenant: here we may plead for *mercy* and *grace*, by the *Tenour* of this Covenant: here we may, *tanquam ex syngrapha, cum Deo agere*, in an humble confidence we may urge God with this Covenant, as the Psalmist doth, *Have respect unto the Covenant*, *Psal. lxxiv. 20.* spread before him his own Testament, present unto him his Son's blood, as the Seal of this Testament, and sue for the benefit of it.

We have done with the first Particular, the *Person*, of whom he craves the blessing; that's *the God of Peace*. Now,

Secondly, follows the *Motive* that he uses, and by which he strengthens, and enforces his Prayer; and that's the consideration of our *Saviour's Resurrection*. And 'tis the divine Art, and holy Rhetorick of Prayer, not only to present our Suits, but to press, and enforce them by the interposition of such prevailing Arguments. And yet we know what strange constructions have been made of those effectual Obtestations, with which the Zeal of the Church hath wrestled with God; beseeching him *by Christ's Death, and Passion, and glorious Resurrection to be merciful to us*. Well, *St. Paul* here practised it, and his example will warrant it.

The Motive, I say, which he uses, it is our *Saviour's Resurrection*. And of it take a double view. Let us see,

I. The Apostle's Description of it.

II. His Application, and improvement of it, for the obtaining of his Prayer.

I. See the Description of it: and that consists of three Particulars.

1. Here is the Person raised, that's *our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of his sheep*.
2. Here is the Action of Raising; *He brought him again from the dead*.
3. In the vertue of which all this was done; that's *by the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*.

1. Here is the Person raised. And he made known,

(1.) By his Personal Title, *The Lord Jesus*. And this Title, 'tis very pertinent, and suitable to his Resurrection. For, however this glorious Title was due to him, even from his birth, yet, 'tis observable, 'tis never compleatly, and *in terminis*, given to him, till after his Resurrection. *Lord* he is called, and *Jesus* he is called before; but, in all the Gospel, you never meet with these, all in one *Appellation*, till his Resurrection. The first place, that names him *The Lord Jesus*, is *Luke xxiv. 3.* After his rising again, 'tis said, *They found not the body of the Lord Jesus*. There it begins, never afore: but then after, frequently. By his Resurrection he was declared to be the *Son of God*; then made known to be *Lord*, and *Christ*. Then this Beautiful

Wreath

Wreath was put upon his Head, and publicly proclaimed, *the Lord Jesus Christ.* *Serm. II.*
But yet the weight, and emphasis of the Speech lies most in this latter Name.

(2.) The Title of his Office. The former indeed is more honourable for him: but this other, *That great Shepherd of the Sheep*, 'tis more comfortable to us, as implying thus much: That, whatsoever befell him in the whole carriage of this Business, befell him not as a *private person*, for his own cause; but in the behalf of those that were committed to his charge: Whatsoever he did, or suffered, 'twas all for his Sheep.

1. His first Mission, and coming into the World, was for his Sheep. *I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matth. xv. 24.*

2. His Death, and Passion, 'Twas not in his own behalf; but for his Sheep. *I lay down my life for my sheep, Joh. x. 15.* We may well invert *David's* Deprecation, *Turn thy hand upon these stray sheep: this Shepherd, what hath he done?*

3. His Resurrection, that was for his Sheep, to resume *that Office*, to take care over his Flock. *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities, Act. iii. 26.* All for us men, and for our salvation. He was born a Shepherd, he died as a Shepherd, rose again as a Shepherd; all for the good, and benefit of his Flock. For us he underwent Death, for us he overcame it in his Resurrection.

For better understanding of this Title, let us take it afunder into these three Particulars:

First, Here is his Charge, they are *Sheep*.

Secondly, Here is his Office, that's a *Shepherd*.

Thirdly, Here is the Dignity of his Office, *That great Shepherd*.

First, We see the Church, the body of Christians, they are called *Sheep*. And this resemblance, 'tis exceeding frequent in Scripture. The Church of God, 'tis called a *Flock of Sheep*. *Fear not, little Flock, saith Christ, Luke xii. 32. Feed the Flock of God, 1 Pet. v. 5. As the holy Flock, the Flock of Jerusalem, Ezek. xxxvi. 38.* 'Tis fitly so termed in these Resemblances:

I. Sheep are *Animalia gregalia*; such kind of Creatures, as naturally gather themselves together, unite into a flock. Other creatures, we know, many of them live single, and apart. And though they sometimes sort together, yet they oft sever, and keep afunder: But Sheep are never right, but when they come together, and live in a flock. Such are Christians; such is the Church, combined in an holy Society, and Communion. 'Tis unnatural for a Sheep to go from the flock. Such are called *scattered sheep*, *Jerem. i. 6. stray sheep*, *Isai. liii. 6. lost sheep*, *Matth. xv. 24.* So are all Christians, that live out of the blessed Communion of the Church. 'Tis a great sin, ἀπομαρτυρία to despise, and forsake the flock. No, Christians must not be so many severals: but we must gather ourselves into an holy Communion, keep our selves within the Fold of the Church. If we belong not to the Flock, we belong not to the Shepherd, we make our selves a prey to the Wolf.

II. Sheep, they are *Animalia innocua*, of a very harmless, and inoffensive nature. *Quod Columba in volatilibus, hoc Ovis in pecoribus, summa vivendi mansuetudo, summa simplicitas*; saith *Chrysostom*. And such must Christians be, endued with *Dove-like simplicity*, with *Lamb-like innocency*. Thus the Prophet (*Isai. lxv. 25.*) describes both the safety, and innocency of the Church: *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf, and the young Lyon shall be together, and a little Child shall lead them: There shall be no hurtful thing in all my holy Mountains.* The most cruel dispositions shall be tamed, and sweetned, when they come once to be of this Flock of Christ. Cruel, injurious, mischievous men they are Bears and Tigers, not Sheep of Christ's Fold. *Saul, Lupus Benjamin, fit Agnus Christi*; before a ravenous Wolf, now become a meek Lamb.

III. Sheep are *Animalia errabunda*; creatures exceeding subject to stray, if not tended, and kept in the better; unable to keep out of error; and having erred, unable to return. Such are Christians, the best of them, if left to themselves. How soon out of the right way are we, if God takes off his guidance, and leaves us unto our selves? into what mazes, and thickets of errors, do we run our selves into?

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Serm. II. I have gone astray like a Sheep, that is lost: O seek thy servant, Psal. cxix. 176. Moses, that famous Shepherd, was absent but a while, and how soon did his flock run astray, and wander?

IV. Sheep are *Animalia debilia*, weak and shiftless Creatures, unable to make resistance. Other Creatures, Nature hath armed them with strength, or skill, or courage, to safe-guard themselves; but sheep are destitute of all these. Take them from their Shepherd, and his protection, a sheep is a weak creature, of no courage to look danger in the face, and make resistance. And such is the Church, if considered in it self, and from under Christ's protection. Thus the Church bewails it's own weakness; *We are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.* The enemies of God's Church are like the fat Bulls of Bashan: whereas God's people are like a few helpless sheep.

V. Sheep, they are *peculium Domini*; they are not, as many other Creatures, wild, and of no man's owning, Creatures at large: but they are the property, and possession of an Owner. We may see a flock of some other Creatures, and yet no man claim them; but, if we see a flock of sheep, we all know, there is some man owns them. So God's Church, 'tis not ἀδόκιμος ἀγέλη, a loose, scattered people; they are his proper possession; they are *his chosen people*, the *sheep of his pasture*, his peculiar people, the People of his purchase, his choice Inheritance.

Secondly, Here is his Office. Christ is a Shepherd. He vouchsafes to be called, and known by that name. *Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a Flock*, Psal. lxxx. 1. Our Saviour assumes this name to himself, *John x. 11. I am the good Shepherd.* All that's requisite in a Shepherd is fully in Christ.

I. A Shepherd is an employment of much Diligence, and Attention; *κηρυμονικὸς ποιμὴν*, it requires a constant, continual inspection over the Flock. Ye may see it in Jacob; day and night, he tended his sheep. Other Creatures are not looked to at all times; but a Flock of sheep must have daily attendance. Such is the watchful care, that Christ hath over his Church. He is no *Idol-shepherd*, as Zechary (chap. xi. 17.) *that leaves the Flock*; but his eyes are always upon them. He walks in the midst of his Churches. *Behold, I am with you always to the end of the World*, Mat. xxviii. 20.

II. A Shepherd is an employment of Tendernefs, and Mildnefs, and of much Compassions. *Ὅλιστα μὲν τῇ βακτηρίᾳ, τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῇ σύειρσι*; most with his Whistle, least with his Staff; (*Nazianz.*) in the ordering of his Flock. If the sheep stray, he seeks them carefully, brings them home gently, lays them on his shoulders. 'Tis the Butcher, not the Shepherd, that fetches blood of them. And such a Shepherd is Christ, not like a Lion over his Flock, but meek, and merciful. Thus the Prophet foretells, and describes him. *Isai. xl. 11. He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead them that are with young.* He is a *merciful High-Priest*, full of tendernefs, and compassion.

III. A Shepherd is an employment of Skill, he must be able to *know the state of his Flock*, Prov. xxvii. 23. What Diseases they are subject to, and how to prevent, or cure them; what Food is wholesom for them, and how to supply them. Sure, in this also, Christ is a perfect Shepherd; he hath not *the Instruments of a foolish Shepherd*, as Zechary speaks, Chap. xi. 15. but is compleatly furnished with all abilities for the good of his Flock. He knows their Diseases, and can cure them; their Dangers, and can prevent them; their Necessities, and can supply them; their Enemies, and can disappoint them. *David* makes this joyful, and thankful, and confident acknowledgment, Psal. xxiii. 1. *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.*

IV. A Shepherd is an employment, that requires stoutnefs, and Courage. *θυλακταὶς* must be ἀντιστατικός. He, that will keep his Flock from mischief, must not fear the Wolf, or flee from him; but withstand and resist him. Such a Shepherd was *David*; there came a Bear and a Lyon to havock the sheep, and he set upon them, and slew them. And such a shepherd is Christ, *mighty to save his flock from their enemies.* He *crushes the jaw-bones of this Lion*, reserves his darling flock from the power of the Wolf.

V. A

V. A Shepherd is an employment of much Patience and Hardship: he must bear *Serm. II.* many a storm, and blast, heat, and cold, undergo all weathers. He must endure much tediousness in seeking, and reducing his poor stray sheep. 'Twas *Jacob's* lot, and much more our Saviour's. He served an hard service; storms and tempests fell upon him in tending his flock; he was a man of afflictions, patiently undergoing all the toyl of his laborious employment. We read of some shepherds in the Scripture (and they no mean ones) that were even tired out, and ready to give over this troublesome service. *Moses*, he was weary of his flock, they vexed him so much. *Jeremy*, he's out of heart, and would fling off this employment. *Zachary* takes his *shepherd's Staff*, and breaks it in pieces. But our Saviour is a shepherd of an unwearied patience: He doth, *παρασκευάζειν*, bears with the waywardness of his unruly flock. 'Twas his meat, and drink, to seek, and bring home his lost sheep. That's the second, *Officium*.

Thirdly, Take notice of the Dignity, and Eminency of this Office. He is called *Magnus Pastor*, *That great Shepherd*.

Great Shepherd! Surely, in the Worlds account, there is scarce good congruity 'twixt these two words, *Magnus Pastor*. If a Shepherd, then we conclude him to be a mean man. Kings, and Priests, joyned together in the Scripture: Nay, Peasants, and Priests, that's the World's Heraldry: so they rank them, set them with the Dogs of the flock, as *Job* speaks, *Chap. xxx. 1.* that's place good enough for them. *Shepherd, Priest, Minister*, all words of contempt, not to be found amongst the Titles of Honour. Nay, what saith *Moses*, *Gen. xlv. 34.* Every Shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians: So is a Church-Shepherd to profane Worldlings. Well, let the Ministry be the scandal, and scorn of the world: let them stumble at it in their folly, or spurn at it in their pride: yet it is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. A Shepherd, 'tis the Office of our Saviour, and the Glory of Christ.

So then, with, or without their leaves, Christ is *The great Shepherd*. Every way great.

I. *Magnus*, great in his Person. If the Son of God become a Shepherd, surely then a great Shepherd. *Bernard* observes it, and admires it, *Dominus exercituum fit Pastor Ovium*. The Lord of Hosts, attended with Troops of Angels, becomes a Shepherd to tend Sheep. 'Tis somewhat strange to see King *Saul* come after the Herd out of the field, *1 Sam. xi. 5.* And 'tis noted of *Uzziah*, another King of *Israel*, that he loved Husbandry. How wonderful is it to see the Lord *Jesus Christ*, with his Shepherd's Crook tending his flock! This humiliation of his Person is a great exaltation of the Office, makes him a great Shepherd. 'Tis said of *Epaminondas*, a great man in his Time, that to put a disgrace upon him, his Citizens chose him Over-seer of the High-ways, to purge, and cleanse them; but by his undertaking, and performing that office, the Office became an Office of Dignity, and Honour, and the chiefeft Citizens were ambitious of it. Surely, if the Son of God becomes a Shepherd, that Office is advanced in him; he is a great Shepherd.

II. *Magnus in ordine*. Christ is the great Shepherd; because he is the supreme Shepherd, the Prince of Shepherds. All other Pastours, of what Title, or Denomination soever, are inferiour to him. He is *ἡγεμόν*, as Saint *Peter* styles him, *The chief Shepherd*, the great Master of the Assemblies, the Arch-angel of the Churches. *Pastorum Deus*, the true God of Shepherds. All hold their employment in dependence from him. That's the second, great in Supremacy.

III. He is *Magnus in Ovili*. He is a great Shepherd; for his Flock is great; great, I mean in the value. His Flock is a flock of Souls, and that's a precious Flock. One soul, 'tis of more worth than the whole world. The Flock of souls, under Christ's keeping, how precious are they! *Fishers of men, Shepherds of Souls, Fathers of spirits*, are no small Employments. Saint *Peter* calls Christ *the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls*, *1 Pet. ii. 25.*

IV. He is *Magnus in amplitudine*. All the Flock of Christians is under his inspection. He is the only true Oecumenical Pastour. All other Shepherds are *Pastores portionarii*, but petty Shepherds, of a portion only of his Flock. But to be the Universal Shepherd of the whole Church, 'tis Christ's Prerogative. In respect of him, and his administration, there is but one Flock, and one Shepherd, *John x. 16.*

Serm. II. V. He is *Magnus in possessione*; the Flock is his own, he is the rightful owner and possessour of it. *The flocks upon a thousand hills, they are all his.* We, the best of us, are but servants to him, to tend his Flock. *Ecclesia data est Papæ*, saith the Pope in his claim. Nay, verily, Christ bids *Peter, Feed my sheep*; they are Christ's, none of *Peter's*. *Gerson* saith well, in the Name of the Church; *Ego non sum tua, sed tu meus es.* The Church, 'tis called *The flock of God*, Acts xx. 28. *He purchased it with his own blood.* We are but assistants, and helpers; not owners, and proprietaries. He sets us on work, to him we owe our accounts; he will pay us our wages, or reckon with them that shall any way defraud us.

VI. He is *Magnus in facultate*; great in his abilities to tend this Flock.

1. *Magnus in notitia*; a great Shepherd in knowing his Flock. He hath a special knowledge of every poor sheep; he hath all their Names engraven on his Breast: *He calls his own sheep by name*, John x. 3.

2. *Magnus in affectu*; great he is in his Love, and Affection to his Flock. He lays down his life for them. He hath purchased them with his own blood. See how he expresses his tenderness of his Flock; *Peter, Lovest thou me? Feed my Flock.* *Nathan's* Parable of the Ew-Lamb, 'tis most true of Christ, and his beloved Flock. He hath brought it, and nourished it up; nay, he lays it in his bosom, 'tis unto him as his Child, it eats of his own meat, drinks of his Cup; nay he feeds us with his own Flesh, and makes us drink of his precious blood, to strengthen, and nourish us up to Eternal life.

3. *Magnus in Potentia*. He is of great Power to save, and preserve them. *Who is this that comes from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah, travelling in his strength, mighty to save?* *Isai. lxiii. 1.* A Text applyed by Expositors to Christ's Resurrection, and to his conquest over the enemies of his Church; his garments red with the blood of the Wolf, which would have worried his sheep; but that he rescued them, and shed the blood of their enemies, overcame Death, trampled on the head of the Serpent, and wrought Eternal salvation for his Flock. *Jacob*, though never so careful, yet some of his Flock were lost, or torn, or stoln away, *Gen. xxxi. 39.* Christ loses not one of his sheep: *Those, that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost*, John xvii. 12. *My sheep shall not perish; no man is able to pluck them out of mine hand*, John x. 28.

ON EASTER-DAY.

The Third Sermon.

JOHN xii. 24.

Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of Wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.



THE Context, at the twentieth Verse, tells us of certain *Greeks* now at *Jerusalem*. Not *Ἕλληνιστῶν*, but *Ἕλλήνων*. *Greeks* they are called; not, as some *Jews* were called *Grecians*, either for their dispersion among other Nations, or for the use of the *Greek* translation of the Holy Scripture: but by their Birth, and Original, they are termed *Greeks*; *Gentiles* by Nation, though well-affected to the *Jewish* Religion. These having heard of the Fame of *Jesus*, sued to the Apostles for admission into his presence, that they might see, and behold him.

Our Saviour rejects not their motion; but takes notice of it, and yields to it as a fore-running sign, and prognostick of the Calling, and Conversion of the *Gentiles*, e're long to be wrought by his Death and Resurrection.

And the words I have read unto you, are our Saviour's Divine Meditation upon his Death, and Passion; and an Assurance, and Declaration of the Glory that should redound to Christ; and of the many benefits, that shall arise to Man-kind upon his Resurrection.

And 'tis expressed by way of similitude, easie, and obvious, and of common observation. Corn unsown, we all know, never multiplies, nor increases; but bury it in the earth, cast it into the furrows, then it springs up again, fructifies, and brings forth a plentiful Harvest: so, had Christ been Incarnate only, and lived amongst us, he had not gained so much glory to himself, he had not brought so much benefit to man-kind; but his sufferings, and Passion, his Death, and Burial, that made him fructifie, that brought a plentiful increase of exaltation to himself, and salvation to the World.

In the Words, Five things offer themselves to us, as most observable.

First, Here is *Christi conditio*, our Saviour's state, and condition: He is *granum tritici*; he compares himself to a grain of Wheat.

Secondly, Here is *Mortis qualitas*, the Nature, and Quality of his Death, and Burial; 'tis *feminatio*, 'tis a sowing of this precious seed in the furrows of the earth.

Thirdly, here is *Mortis necessitas*; the great necessity of his Death, and Passion: *Except it fall into the ground, and die, it abides alone.*

Fourthly, Here is *Mortis utilitas*, the great good that shall come by his Death: *But if it die, it brings forth much fruit.*

Fifthly, Here is the solemn confirmation of all this truth; it hath the seal of Heaven set to it: *Amen, amen. Verily I say unto you*: and that we may call our Faith's Assurance.

The First thing considerable is our Saviour's State, and Condition; he terms himself here a *grain of Wheat*. And the similitude suits well with him; it sets out his nature, and condition in divers respects.

Serm. III. First, A grain of wheat, 'tis pure, and solid Corn, the choicest of all grains, severed from chaff, or any other vileness, that may debase it; especially your seed-corn (of which the Text speaks) 'tis of the best and cleanest. The Prophet *Isaiah* tells us of this point of Husbandry, Chapter xxviii. 25, *The Plough-man, saith he, will cast into the earth the principal Wheat.* And such a grain of Wheat was our Blessed Saviour:

I. Solid, as the fullest grain. There was in him *the fat and kidneys of the Wheat*, as *Moses* terms them, *Deut.* xxxii. 14. the body, substance of all goodness was in him.

II. Pure, as the purest grain, that's cleansed, and winnowed from dust, or chaff; no defilement came near him; no sinful infirmity did soil, or pollute him. *Satan*, that great winnower, did sift, and winnow him, first by temptation, then by affliction, but all in vain. *The Prince of the world cometh, saith Christ, and hath nothing in me*, *Joh.* xiv. 30. This winnower hath nothing for his pains, but only the chaff; but in Christ there was no chaff, and so he lost his labour. Indeed, all man-kind, by nature, what were we, but Tares, and Cockle, and Darnel, an heap of Dross? Nay, the best of us are even now, in the state of regeneration, good corn, though we be mixed with much chaff. An unconverted sinner, he is as Tares, bad in the very kind: a Saint is, as winnowed corn, not fully severed from chaff, and dross. But Christ was pure, and precious seed, *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, *Heb.* vii. 26. winnowed from all uncleanness in his first conception. The Original, and Principle of his Conception was holy. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost: he had no tainted original. The soil, into which he was cast, 'twas cleansed. The *Virgin*, who conceived him, was sanctified by the Spirit. We, all of us, are a corrupted seed, and spring out of a corrupted soil: but this grain of Corn was pure, and precious; no refuse-Wheat, but choice and principal.

Secondly, Christ was a grain of Wheat, and that, we know, is *mole parvum, sed virtute magnum*. Look to the bulk, and bigness of it, 'tis small, and contemptible; but, if you consider that seminal virtue, that lies hid in it, and springs from it, then 'tis greatly estimable. And 'tis so with Christ. Look upon his outward appearance, so he seemed mean and contemptible; but, consider the power, and virtue, and efficacy that was in him, then he will appear great and admirable. Indeed, seed is to be esteemed not by the quantity, but by the inward virtue and efficacy of it. The grain of Mustard seed, saith Christ, is the least of all seeds; but it will grow into a great Tree. Thus was it with Christ; his Outside was despicable, *Can this man save us?* He was despised of the People, *All that saw him set him at nought*, *Psal.* xxii. 7. *Isaiah* sets out his despicable condition, *Chap.* liii. 2. *He was despised, and rejected of men*; he was a scandal to the Jews, a scorn to the Gentiles: the Jews stumbled at him: the Gentiles spurned at him. He was *Nullificamen populi*, as *Tertullian* renders it; but yet he had a Divine virtue, and efficacy in him. *He was the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, *1 Cor.* i. 24. The fulness of grace dwelt abundantly in him. The Ark typified, and represented him: it had an homely outside, covered with Leather, and Hair-cloth; but the inside all overlaid with Gold.

Thirdly, In a grain of Wheat there is a more terrestrial, and earthy part, which rots, and putrifies, and corrupts in the ground; and there is a more vigorous, and lively part, that puts forth it self, and springs up again. It was so likewise in Christ. His Humanity, that suffered, and decayed, and was made subject to death: the seed mouldered under the clots: but his Divinity, that was as the vigour, and strength, and life of the seed; by the virtue of it he revived, and rose again, and sprung up plenteously. His Divinity, that did *coruscare miraculis*: His Humanity, that did *succumbere injuriis*: as *Leo ad Flavianum*. Saint Paul sets out these parts in Christ, *Rom.* i. 3. *He was of the seed of David, according to the flesh*; a mortal man from a mortal seed; but he appeared to be the Son of God, by the Resurrection from the dead. That, which he had from Adam, was from the earth, earthy; but in his Divinity, he was the Lord from heaven, heavenly. He was crucified through weakness, saith St. Paul, *2 Cor.* xiii. 4. His infirm part, his Humanity, that suffered, and was crucified; but he lives by the power of God: his God-head, and Divinity, that revived him again, and brought him from the dead. According to his Humanity, he

he was a Lamb slain; but according to his Divinity, he was a victorious Lyon: *Serm. III.* He was both the Lamb of God, and the Son of God. Both these were necessary. The concurrence of both was prefigured in the Law. To the purging of a Leper, both a Bird slain, and a living Bird were to be offered. The slain Bird, that betokened his Passion; but the living Bird, that was let to fly, that betokened his Resurrection. He was both the Goat sacrificed, and the Scape-goat likewise. He bare our sins in his Passion, and he bare them away in his Resurrection.

Fourthly, *Grænum Triticum*, 'tis *grænum utilissimum*; 'tis the most profitable Grain to the life of man. The grain of Wheat, 'tis the vital, and nourishing Grain. Our food, and foison comes chiefly from it. And Christ abundantly makes good the truth of this Similitude. He is the bread of life, that gives life unto the World, John vi. 35. Till we get this food, we feed only on empty husks, that cannot nourish us; but Christ is the staff of bread, and the strength of our life. Thus, we see, he compares himself to those two fruitful Plants, that serve most for nourishment; the Vine, John xv. 5. that's fruitful for Drink; and Wheat, that's fruitful for Food: Wine, that makes glad the heart; and Bread, that strengthens man's heart, Psal. civ. 15. The strengthening Bread, and the comforting, and refreshing Wine; Christ becomes both to us. These two are not only similitudes, but raised to be Mysterious Sacraments, effectual Conveyances of our spiritual nourishment. This grain of Wheat was broken with the Flail of affliction, bruised, and broken, and grounded to dust, baked, and made Bread in the Furnace of his Passion: This fruitful Grape, this goodly bunch of *Eskol* was put into the Wine-press, the blood of this Grape was crushed out in his Passion: and both these make up our spiritual sustenance; our Souls feed on this blessed Bread, and we drink of this sacred Wine, that we may live by it.

There is one thing more in this Similitude. Christ here instances in *κίσμος*, in one corn, or grain of Wheat: wherein the spiritual seed surpasses the common condition of sowing. Husbandmen do not sow one grain of Wheat: but a greater quantity; *ὁ χειρὶ, ἀλλὰ τῷ θύλακας*, as the Greek Proverb hath it, the basket-full, or the sack full of seed is scattered into the ground; but here, in this holy Husbandry, Christ speaks but of one grain of Wheat cast into the earth.

Christ here speaks of his own personal Death, and Resurrection, and that is best represented by this one grain of Wheat. As the Father, discoursing of Christ's raising of Lazarus out of the grave, observes this difference 'twixt this Resurrection, and the Resurrection of all. At the last day, all, saith he, that hear the voice of the Son of God, shall rise again: but they only hear it, to whom it is directed. Then he will call all Flesh out of their Graves: here he speaks to one only, Lazarus, Come forth; though it may be other dead men were buried with Lazarus in the same Cave. Though all Christians are grains of Wheat, as our Saviour is: yet there is a singularity in Christ above all other Christians, and so his Death, and Resurrection, is distinct from ours: that as St. Paul speaks, he may *ὑπερβῆναι*, and have the preheminance. Though he doth admit us into a participation; yet still he observes some distance, and distinction. When he sent his Disciples tidings of his Resurrection, and Ascension, he saith, *I go to my Father, and to your Father; to my God, and to your God*. Even in this Community, he reserves a Propriety and excellency to himself. And,

II. As this is a personal, so 'tis a Mystical Expression; because his death, and Resurrection, 'tis the Principle, and Original of our Resurrection. *Adam universale principium mortis, Christus universale principium vitæ*. As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. His Resurrection 'twas personal, but not private; he rose as a publick person, as the Author of life to all his Members. The First-fruits are Christ's, then they that are Christ's at his coming. Our Resurrections are but appendices Resurrectionis Dominicæ. We are planted into the similitude of his Death, and Resurrection. His Resurrection hath an assimilating virtue in it, to turn ours likewise into the condition of his.

III. Take it in the Latitude, as this speech may concern our Resurrection. To every good purpose is it thus expressed. A grain of Wheat, it sets out the special, and personal assurance of our Resurrection. Every grain of God's seed-corn shall rise again.

'Tis

Serm. III. 'Tis not so in your ordinary Husbandry, some grains fall on the way-side, some rot under the clots, and never take root; 'tis well, if the most spring up again, ye reckon not of all: but every grain of this holy Husbandry shall spring up, and fructifie. *Curat singulos, sicut universos.* He will raise every one in his due place and rank. Not a Saint shall be wanting, not a Member of them shall be lost; nay, *not an hair of their head shall perish.* O, *si sic custodiantur superflua tua, in quanta securitate sit anima tua!* Not the least Member of Christ shall perish.

Secondly, A second thing observable, is, *Mortis qualitas*, the Quality and Condition of our Saviour's Death and Burial, 'tis *seminatio*; 'tis here called a sowing of this precious seed into the furrows of the Earth; that's the true esteem and account that Christ makes of his Death and Burial; For understanding of this, we may take notice of three Estimates that were put upon our Saviour's Death.

First, The first was the Estimate of Flesh and Blood; what thought that of Christ's Death and Passion? Oh, far otherwise than of a sowing. They counted no otherwise of it, than of a spilling, and perdition. The common People of the *Jews*, when Christ tells them of his Death, they account it absurd, and ridiculous: "What talk you of dying? If thou beest the Christ, the Messias shall abide for ever, *John xii. 34.* Nay, *St. Peter* had no better opinion of our Saviour's Death. When Christ told him of his Death and Passion, *Mat. xvi. 21.* what saith *Peter*? Oh, *Master, far be it from thee; Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* He could not endure to hear, that Christ must die, he should then lose him for ever. The two Disciples that went to *Emmaus* thought all was lost, now Christ was dead, and buried; "We hoped, say they, that he should have redeemed *Israel*; now no such matter, he is buried, and all our hope is buried with him, *Luke xxiv. 21.* This made the Disciples so pensive, and sorrowful, when Christ acquainted them at any time with his Death and Passion. Just as some ignorant man, unacquainted, with the course of Husbandry, would think the Husband-man spills his Corn, and casts it away, when he sees him scatter it upon the furrows of the Field. That's the Estimate of Flesh and Blood; they think the righteous perisheth, when he dies. Christ's Passion seems no other to carnal men, than a Perdition.

Secondly, There is a second Estimate, that was made of the Death and Burial of our Saviour, and that's the Estimate of Enmity, and Malice in the contrivers of his death. What thought they of his Death, and Burial? O, the *Jews*, that crucified him, intended his Death should be no sowing; but his utter destruction. They thought to stop the course of his conversion of Souls; they repined at those who believed on him, consulted which way to prevent him. *If we let him alone, all men will believe in him, John xi. 48.* "O, saith *Caiphas*, (full wisely, as he thought) let's put him to death, get him under ground once; that will put an end to all his proceedings. Nail him to the Cross, seal up his Sepulchre, set a strong guard about it; and then they think they are sure they shall hear no more of him. Cast *Jonas* into the Sea, and all will be well; there will be an end of him, and of all his Prophecies. Thus the Brethren of *Joseph* thought to make a riddance of him, by selling him into *Egypt*; they would prevent his Dreams of preferment; they would make sure, the Corn of Wheat should never rise up to a Sheaf, to which their Sheafs should bow down, and do homage. That's the second Estimate, that Malice puts upon our Saviour's Death, and Burial: 'Tis no sowing, but a destruction. But,

Thirdly, Then see what's the Estimate that Faith puts upon Christ's Death and Burial. O, Christ assures our Faith, that his Death and Burial, 'tis no other than a sowing of a precious seed into a fruitful soil. 'Tis no spilling of it, as carnal reason supposed; 'tis no destroying of it, as Malice intended: but the committing of a grain of Corn to a fruitful soil. 'Tis *seminatio*, and that implies two things:

I. Sowing, 'tis *Opus intelligentiæ*. Sowing, 'tis a chief part of the Husband-man's skill. Thus *Isaiah* describes the work of the Husband-man, *Isai. xxviii. 25.* *When the Plough-man scatters, and casts in his principal Wheat into the furrows, his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him; this comes from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.* There is great art, and skill, and cunning in sowing. And thus was Christ's Death, and Passion, wisely and wonderfully

wonderfully ordered by God. 'Twas not brought to pass casually; but God the Father, the great *Husband-man* of his Church, (as our Saviour calls him, *John* xv. 1.) intended, purposed, decreed his Death. He ordered all the particulars, and circumstances of it, chose the season for sowing, set the appointed time when he should die, to an hour, *Verse* 23. chose the soil where he should be sown; foretold the very furrow, into which he should be cast, *Joseph's* sepulchre, *Isai.* liii. 9. *He made his Grave with the rich in his death*; he forelaid, and ordered all the circumstances, and instruments of his Passion. That's the first; Sowing, 'tis *opus intelligentiæ*.

II. Sowing, 'tis *Opus spei*. Sowing, 'tis a word, and work of Hope. He that sows, looks to receive his seed again. He that Ploughs, *ploughs in hope*, saith *Paul*, *1 Cor.* ix. 10. Such was the Death and Burial of our Saviour; he was put into the Grave in a full assurance of a Resurrection. This blessed hope was foretold by *David*, *Psal.* xvi. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, nor suffer thine holy One to see corruption: Thou wilt shew me the paths of life*. There was a path of life from these chambers of death. Thus, we see, when Christ mentions his Death, still he sweetens it with the hope, and assurance of his Resurrection, *Matth.* xvi. 21. *The Son of man must be killed, and be raised again the third day*. He still acquaints them with it, and with the very time, and season of it, *The third day*. *He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures*, saith *St. Paul*, *1 Cor.* xv. 3. What Scripture pointed it out? *Hosea* did it, *Chap.* vi. 2. *After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight*. As in the Creation, 'twas the third day, that the earth brought forth its fruit, whose seed was in it self; so in this new Creation, on the third day was this blessed fruit raised out of this earth. Still our Saviour mentions his Resurrection, as the consequent of his Passion. Carnal Reason thinks it an hopeless, and impossible thing, that a dead man should revive, and rise again; but what saith *St. Peter*? *Acts* ii. 24. *God hath raised Christ up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible he should be holden of it*. O, 'tis impossible he should rise, saith Infidelity: nay, (saith Faith, and Hope) 'tis impossible but he should rise again. *St. Paul*, with confidence, avows it, speaking to *Agrippa*: *Acts* xxvi. 8. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead?* Who can hinder the corn from springing, or the Sun from rising? *It tarries not for man, nor waits for the Sons of men*, *Micah* v. 7.

We proceed to the next thing considerable, and that is,

Thirdly, *Mortis necessitas*; the Necessity of Christ's Death: *Except the corn of Wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abides alone*. It was expedient, yea necessary, that Christ should die.

But then the enquiry must be, *What kind of necessity brought Christ to his Death?*

First, It was not *Necessitas Naturæ*: He died not out of any natural necessity, as we mortal men do. By virtue of his God-head, to which his Humane Nature was united, he could have communicated an impassible immortality unto his body. Nay, Divines conclude, that Immortality, 'twas *Dos humanitatis*, 'twas the Dowry of his Humanity, by virtue of those mystical espousals of his Flesh, 'twas due to his Humane Nature; but for great cause suspended; for the suffering of Death.

Secondly, It was not *Necessitas violentiæ*: his Life was not in the power of any outward violence? *No man takes my life from me, I lay it down of my self*, *Joh.* x. 18. Had he not yielded unto death, he could not be enforced. *Sampson* must suffer himself to be bound, or the *Philistines* could not have over-mastered him. But,

Thirdly, It was *Necessitas Ordinationis divinae*. God had given him a Body to die. He was not only corn, but seed. But seed must be sown. You keep not your seed-corn always in your Granary; but 'tis cast into the ground. *Pereat in agro, non in horreo*; it must be buried in the earth, not reserved, and kept above ground. *For this came he into the World*. This made Christ so willing to submit to Death. How did he rebuke *Peter*, when he dissuaded him from it? This made him put himself into the hands of his murderers. *Shall I not drink of the cup my Father gives me?* *John* xviii. 11. This made him forbear the help of any rescue. All the Angels of Heaven would have run to his rescue; but how then should the Scripture be fulfilled? saith Christ, *Matth.* xxvi. 54.

Fourthly,

Serm. III. Fourthly, There was *Necessitas Finis*. If Christ die not, the work he came to do had not been effected. If the corn die not, it remains alone. His Natural body might have been glorified; but not his Mystical: his Natural body might have been glorified by virtue of his Hypostatical union; but his Mystical body (which we are) was to be saved, and glorified by virtue of his Passion. Had he not died, we may invert the Speech of the Jews: *He saves himself, but others he could not save*: Yea, we may invert the Speech of the Psalmist, *What profit is there in my life, if I go not down into the pit*? No, the grave must praise thee, that must declare thy truth. Corn remains corn in the Granary; but it remains alone, there is no hope of any Harvest, if it be not sown. All that Christ did, the fruit, and accomplishment of it, depended on his death, was made good by his Passion; they all lead to this, as to their end, and aim.

I. His incarnation furnished him with a Body to suffer.

II. His Circumcision was a Pledge, and Obligation, that all his blood should be shed in his Passion.

III. His Sanctification, that made him a fit body, holy, and unspotted, and meet to suffer.

IV. His Obedience that was not full, till it came *usque ad mortem*, till he was *obedient unto death*.

V. His merits were not applicable to us, but by virtue of his Death: his blood must first ransom, and redeem us, before his merits could be of any avail to us. We see, that small fruit was reaped before his Death. His personal preachings gained but few: Saint John observes it, *John xii. 37. Though he had done so many Miracles before them, yet they believed not in him*; but the fulness of Grace was reserved till after his Passion, and Resurrection. And that brings in the fourth thing observable; that is,

Fourthly, *Mortis utilitas*; the great good that shall come by his death, *If the corn of Wheat die, it brings forth much fruit*. And such was the death of Christ; it fructified exceedingly. Take it in three particulars:

First, *Fructificavit sibi gloriam*; great glory accrued to him by his Death and Passion, and the consequent of it in his Resurrection.

I. He got a glorious Victory over Death, and all his, and our ghostly enemies, Hell, and all the powers of Hell, all conspired against him, and now, by his Death, all are subdued, and vanquished by him. He *spoiled Principalities and Powers*, trampled them under his feet. That's the glory of his Passion; by Death he entred into the Grave, the Hold of Death, and brake down those Bars of the Grave, set that Iron gate open, that was shut up upon him.

II. He got a glorious Triumph to himself in his Resurrection; he rose gloriously. His Cross and Passion, was *Campus victoriæ*; but his, Resurrection, that was *Currus Triumphi*. He rose gloriously. His body was sown in weakness; but it was raised in Power, cloathed with glory and immortality: The Apostle tells us, *We sow bare corn, but it springs not up bare corn, as 'twas sown: but it comes up with the beauty of the stalk, the flourishing of the ear*; so Christ rose a glorified body. That precious seed was carried out weeping; but he returns with full sheaves, rejoicing. *Ought not Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26.

III. He gained *Gloriam Nominis*; by his Passion he did merit, and at his Resurrection he obtained the glory of his Name. Now he comes in Triumph, with his Name written on his *Vesture*, and on his *Thigh*, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Revel. xix. 16. He was, *for the suffering of Death, crowned with glory and honour*, Hebr. ii. 9. *He was obedient to the death of the Cross, therefore God highly exalted him, and gave him a Name above every Name; a Name, to whom all knees both in heaven and earth, do bow*. By his Resurrection, he was mightily declared to be the Son of God. By his Resurrection, he was not first made the Son of God, as *Socinus* wickedly affirms; but yet he was openly, and solemnly proclaimed, and published to be the eternal Son of the ever-living God. That's the first, *Sibi gloriam*.

Secondly, *Fructificavit hominibus salutem*. By his Passion, and at his Resurrection, to man-kind he brought forth much fruit. Indeed, the Glory was his; but the profit and benefit doth redound to us. In this holy Harvest Christ deals with us, as
Land-

Land-lords do sometimes with their Tenants, that let their Crop to halves: the glory of it Christ reserves to himself; but the profit, and benefit he vouchsafes unto us. *For us he died, and for us he rose again*; the main harvest is ours. The Angels (those *volatilia cæli*, those birds of Heaven) picked up some grains of this Harvest; but the full sheaves belong to us. Serm. II^L

Three rich, and glorious fruits and benefits we reap by it:

I. The New Covenant of the Gospel, that gracious Covenant and Testament, wherein he is pleased to treat with us again after our first forfeiture in Adam; again to entertain us upon gracious terms of condescension, and to give us good hope through grace; all this was founded, and established, and fully ratified by his Death, and Resurrection. Hence it is, that his blood is called *the blood of the New-Testament*, upon which it was founded. And, will you know the tenour of this Covenant? St. Paul sets it down, *Rom. x. 9. If thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

II. A second fruit, and benefit we reap by his Death, and Resurrection, is forgiveness of sins, Reconciliation with God; that's merited by his Death, accomplished by his Resurrection. He, as our surety, lay under the arrest of Death; he hath discharged our debt, cancelled our bond, and, for our behoof, was enlarged out of the prison of the grave, and so wrought our liberty. St. Paul expresses it, *Rom. iv. 25. He was delivered to death for our sins, and rose again for our justification.*

III. The gift of the Holy Ghost, the shedding forth of that, that was a fruit of his Death and Resurrection. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39. When he was risen, *umbra Petri* did more than *substantia Christi*; the shadow of Peter healed more diseases, than the touch of his garment before his Resurrection. His Death purchased it; his Resurrection performed it. The Apostle ascribes it to his Passion, *Hebr. xiii. 12. Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate*: and the same Apostle, in the same place, ascribes it to his Resurrection, Verse 20. *The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work.* His bodily death begets in us a dying to sin: his bodily Resurrection, that works in us a spiritual resurrection to holiness of life.

Then his Death, and Resurrection,

Thirdly, *Fructificavit Ecclesiæ incrementum*; it wrought a plentiful harvest in the conversion of the world to our Christian Religion. *Moriatur granum tritici, & surgat gentium seges*, saith Bernard. From that one grain of wheat sprung that huge Harvest of Converts, and Believers. What Paul saith of Abraham, is most fully true of Christ; *There sprang even of one, and him truly dead, as many as the stars of the skie in multitude, and as the sand which is by the Sea-shore, innumerable*, *Hebr. xi. 12. Isaiah* prophesies of this great increase, *Chap. liii. 10. When he hath made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and the work of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.* David foretells this plentiful harvest, and increase of Christ's Kingdom, *Psal. lxxii. 16. There shall be an heap of corn in the top of the Mountains, his fruit shall shake like Lebanon.* This was shadowed out by that great multitude of fishes, which the Disciples took after Christ's Resurrection. He bids them cast in their net, and presently they were not able to draw it, *for the multitude of fishes*: This prefigured the great success of the Gospel after Christ's Resurrection. *What! shall a Nation be born in one day?* saith the Prophet *Isaiah*. Yes, saith St. Peter, *The day of his Resurrection hath begot us again. Sepulchrum Christi, 'tis uterus Resurrectionis*; 'tis as the womb of his Birth, 'tis as the dew of the morning, upon the face of the whole earth.

Fifthly, There is yet one thing more considerable in the Text, and that's the solemn ratification of it: *Amen, Amen; Verily, Verily, I say unto you.* And this Ratification, 'tis to great good purpose.

First, It confirms the Truth, yea, the necessity of Christ's Passion, and Resurrection. This assurance, 'tis the Broad Seal of Heaven, set to this principal Article of our Christian profession. He, that is the *Amen, the faithfull and true witness*, testifies this to the Churches, *Rev. i. 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I live for ever-*

Serm. III. *more, Amen; and have the Keys of Death, and of Hell.* Christ confirms this Article of his Passion, and the Resurrection, with at *Oportet: Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and so to enter into his glory? Oportet, so it must be.* The Father hath decreed it, our Saviour hath undertaken it, our sins required it, no salvation without it.

Secondly, This Asseveration exacts our Faith, and firm belief of it. And it was no more than needful to seal up this Truth with this strong Confirmation; for the Faith of the Disciples startled at this Doctrine, and could not easily assent to it. When Christ tells them of his Death and Passion, they could not endure it, their hearts were heavy, and sorrowful, they could not digest it. When he tells them of his Resurrection, they could not conceive it, they wondered what his rising from the dead should mean, *Mark ix. 10.* This vital, and saving Novelty Christ commends to their Faith with all earnestness, *Luke ix. 44.* *Let these Sayings sink down into your ears; I, and into your hearts too.* St. Paul makes these two Truths the sum and substance of the Gospel, *1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.* *That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. By this Faith ye are saved,* saith St. Paul. If this be not believed, our Preaching is in vain, ye are yet in your sins.

Thirdly, This Asseveration expresses our Saviour's strong meditation, and firm resolution to make this Truth good. He puts himself into a deep premeditation of his Death, and Passion; and of that glory that should follow upon it. The thoughts of his Death were not unwelcome to him, nor the hopes of Glory fickle and uncertain. Alas! how do we startle at the thoughts of Death, and lay them out of our minds? whereas we see our Saviour frequently, seriously, affectionately meditates of his departure out of the world. In the greatest manifestations of his glory, he still insists upon the thoughts of his Death and Passion.

I. Here, when the Gentiles come to honour him, and to wonder at him, presently he calls to mind his Death and Burial.

II. When Peter made that noble confession of him, *Thou art the Son of the living God,* *Matth. xvi. 16.* he presently falls into the speech of his Death, and Passion. *The Son of God,* saith Peter: Well, saith Christ, *The Son of man must suffer many things, and be put to death, and rise again.*

III. Upon his glorious Transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, when God the Father put great honour, and glory upon him, then he seasons this glory with the meditation of his Death, and Passion. *He talked with Moses and Elias of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* He acquaints his Disciples with his Passion, and his rising from the dead, *Matth. xvii. 22, 23.* This purpose was firmly settled in his heart. God the Father did not lead him unknowingly to his Passion, (as Abraham did Isaac, when he was to sacrifice him, and surprized him on the sudden) but what saith Christ? *I lay down my life, and I take it up again; This commandment I received of my Father.*

For Use, and Application:

Let us bring this Text home to our selves:

First, In a threefold Meditation.

Secondly, In a threefold Imitation.

Thirdly, In a threefold Comfort, which this Text affords us.

First, In a threefold Meditation.

First Meditation let be, *Via afflictionis, via ad gloriam.* Christ's sufferings and afflictions, they lead him to glory. Then meditate upon the use, and benefit of afflictions. Christ was consecrated by afflictions: so are Christians, and sanctified by them. A Christian, that abounds most with affliction here, his portion of glory shall be greatest hereafter. *As our sufferings abound, so do our consolations,* saith St. Paul. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.* Hard Weather, and a cold Winter is good for your Corn, it will bring a plentiful Harvest. Thus Paul cheers up Timothy, bids him endure afflictions; *Remember,* saith he, *that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead,* *2 Tim. ii. 8.* Let that encourage thee.

Second Meditation, Via Mortis, via ad vitam. Consider by Christ's example, that the way to gain life, was first to lose it. We must sow our Corn, if we mean to reap it; lay down our lives willingly, if we mean to enjoy them. They that mean to be gainers

if you will have an Harvest to eternal life. We must be implanted into the similitude of Christ's Death, if we look to be implanted into the similitude of his Resurrection, Rom. vi. 5. *Moriendo vivam*, is the Christians Motto. Through the valley of Death, lies the path of Life. *Morere, ut vivas; sepelire, ut resurgas*: Aug. Serm. III.

Third Meditation, Vis malignantium, via ad victoriam. Malicious Persecution breeds, and brings to us the greater exaltation. The Jews they thought to destroy Christ by death; but they made him the more glorious. They are mad men, to think the Corn is destroyed, when 'tis cast into the earth; it increases the more by it. 'Tis so with the Church; these Persecutions, they are so many prunings of the Vine; 'twill be the more fruitful. *Sanguis Martyrum, semen Ecclesiæ.* The Church prospers most, when the World most maligns it. Pharaoh thought to root out the Israelites; the more he oppressed them, the more they increased, as Jethro observed it: In that thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them, Exod. xviii. 11. The wrath of man shall turn to thy praise, saith David. *Trucidantur, & multiplicantur*; saith Augustine of Christians. In all these things we are more than Conquerours.

That's our threefold Meditation.

Secondly, Here we must think of a threefold Imitation of our Lord, and Saviour:

First is, Christianus granum. What Christ is, a Christian must be careful to be, a grain of good Wheat. Be sure we prove good corn, if we mean to be sown with good success. Take heed we prove not Thistles in stead of Wheat. Tares, and Chaff, are for the fire; but good Corn for the furrow. God will sow none but good Corn in his Field; 'tis the Envious man that sows Tares, whose end is to be burned, Matth. xiii. 27. Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy Field? from whence then hath it Tares? He said, An enemy hath done this, &c. Matth. iii. 12. He will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable fire.

Second Imitation of Christ, is, Mors præcogitanda. We saw Christ abounded in the thoughts of Death; so should a good Christian. Premeditation will breed Preparation, overcome Fear, dispose us to a chearful entertainment of Death. See how Christ fits you, and furnishes you with helps to this duty, out of our Profession. Put not thy Plough into the ground; but think of thine own furrow, into which thou must be cast, thy Grave and Burial. A Christian should spiritualize all the ordinary passages of his secular employment. Break up the fallow ground, saith Jeremy, in sorrow, and repentance: Sow not among Thorns, but in subactio solo, in an honest heart, as in a good soil.

Third Imitation; Mors fructuosa: take care thy death be fruitful. Learn that of Christ, that thy death may be useful, and profitable. So die, that God may gain glory, Religion may be honoured, thy brethren confirmed, and edified in the practice of piety. This will make our death to be precious, as David speaks. When God, and his grace is magnified in our bodies, by life, and by death: when we so die, that our Death gives testimony to the power of Religion; that it is able to overcome in us the fear of death, the love of life, and to account it best to be with Christ.

Thirdly, The Text affords us a threefold Comfort.

First, Mors sementis; that's a word of Hope. Our death is a sowing; there is hope in that. We fall into our graves, as seed into the furrows. And what we sow, we do not look it should perish, but be preserved. We owe the comfort of this hope to our Christian Religion, that bids us not judge of Death, as men without hope. The grave of a Christian, 'tis a fruitful soil. The Church-yard (as the High-Dutch call it) is Gods-acre, where he sows his seed. *Cineres Sanctorum sunt semina immortalitatis.* The Scripture, to beget this hope in our death, uses two hopeful, and comfortable expressions.

I. This of sowing; and there is Hope in that.

II. That of Sleeping; and that's a word of Hope: *If he sleep, he shall do well*; said the Disciples, when Lazarus was dead. Our graves are κοιμητήρια, our sleeping places, beds of rest, as the Prophet Isaiah calls them; *When the righteous die, they enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds*, Isai. lvii. 2.

Secondly, *Resurrectio Messis*; that's a word of joy. Our Resurrection shall be a fruitful Harvest to us, and there is joy in that. *They shall joy as in the joy of Harvest*,

Serm. III. Isa. ix. 3. *They that carry out good seed weeping, shall, in God's good time, return with joy, and bring their sheaves with them.* Harvest doth not only return you your seed; but multiplies it to you; whole sheaves, for a few grains of Corn. Herod had so much Divinity in him, as to confess this: *John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him,* Mark. vi. 14. Here is the comfort and joy of a Christian: *We are God's Husbandry,* as St. Paul speaks. Our Resurrection will be our Harvest; the Angels shall be Reapers, Mat. xiii. 39. Heaven the Granary, into which we shall be gathered. The sorrow of our Seed-time in our Death and dissolution, will be abundantly recompensed by the joy of our Harvest at the Resurrection. *Si times Mortem, ama Resurrectionem.*

Thirdly, *Primitiæ, Christus*; and that's a word of Assurance, in that Christ was this day the first-fruits of this Harvest in his Resurrection; and the First-fruits were a pledge of the whole Harvest. This was represented upon the day of his Resurrection: *Many dead Saints came out of their Graves, after his Resurrection,* Mat. xxvii. 53. As Chrysostom, "When the Stomach casts up that it cannot hold, it brings up other things with it. 'Twas prefigured in the Law; they were to bring their first ripe sheaf of Corn, and present it to God: That was an assurance of their following Harvest. *First Christ, the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming,* 1 Cor. xv. 23. His Resurrection, 'tis *Clavis resurrectionis nostræ.* His Resurrection was not only the Example, but the Principle of our Resurrection: and doubt not of thine own. Those that are Christs, he will bring with him; and we shall ever be with the Lord.

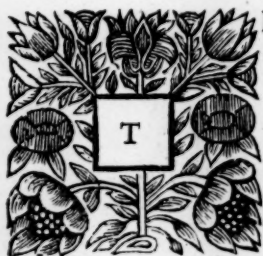


ON EASTER-DAY,

The Fourth Sermon.

John ii. 19.

Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.



THE Time, and the Text have a mutual correspondence, and suit well together. The Feast, which we now celebrate, 'tis the Holy Commemoration of our *Christian Pasover*, when Christ, the true *Pascal Lamb*, was offered up for us upon the Altar of the Cross. And the Time when these words were uttered by our Saviour, was in the revolution of the like Solemnity. They were spoken when the *Jews Pasover* was at hand, and Christ was now at *Jerusalem* to celebrate that Festival, *Verse 13.*

And as the season of the Words is suitable, proper for the time: So the sum and substance of them, the materials of which they consist, are exceeding pertinent; they come close and home to the present occasion. The Passion of our Saviour, and his Resurrection; his ignominious Death, and his glorious rising to Life again, are the two great Mysteries which the Faith of the Church doth at this time commemorate. And the Text, 'tis pregnant with these two Truths. It represents these

these two great Articles of Faith to our meditation. Behold, it sets before us Death and Life, as Moses speaks. Serm. IV.

First, The Death of our Saviour, and his bloody Passion, that's in the former part of this Text, *Destroy this Temple*; and so they did to the uttermost, they defaced and destroyed the sacred Temple of Christ's Body; they cried, *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground*; there was not left one stone upon another, that was not thrown down. That was the work of Good-Friday; the miserable ruine of this Temple at his Death and Passion. And then,

Secondly, Here is set before us his Resurrection to life, in the latter part of the Text; *Let them destroy this Temple, I will raise it up again in three days*. The third day he rose again from the dead, repaired these ruins, laid the foundation of this Temple, and reared up the roof too, finished it, and beautified it, and made it more glorious. *The Briks were fallen down; but he built it up again with hewn stones: The Sycomors were cut down; but he changed them into Cedars*. The glory of this Temple, in his Resurrection, exceeded, and surpassed the first glory of this Temple in his Incarnation.

Indeed, these two Truths, our Saviour's Passion, and our Saviour's Resurrection, are the two main fundamental Articles of our Christian Faith; the two main Pillars upon which the whole Building of God's Church doth rest. The Scripture makes them the Summary, and Compendium, and Abridgment of the Gospel.

First, Christ reduces the Scripture to these two Heads, Luke xxiv. 45. *He opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scripture, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day*.

Secondly, He makes it the Sum of that Commission which he received from the Father; *I lay down my life, that I may take it up again: This commandment I received of my Father*, John x. 18.

Thirdly, Saint Paul makes the belief of these two Truths, the matter of our righteousness, and justification, Rom. iv. 24. *It shall be imputed to us for righteousness, to believe that he was delivered to death for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*.

Fourthly, 'Tis, or should be, the aim, and argument of all our Preaching: The Apostle makes it so, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *That which he delivered to them, was this, That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and, that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*. If we preach not this, *our preaching is in vain*; if you believe not this, *your Faith is in vain, ye are yet in your sins*, Verse 14.

Fifthly, These two are the main Fountains of all Grace and Holiness; the two powerful Principles of all Sanctification; that, from whence the new Life of a Christian must spring and arise. Thus Paul describes the life of Christianity, Phil. iii. 10. *he calls it a Conformity to Christ's Death, and the feeling of the power of his Resurrection*. And so again, Rom. vi. 5. *he calls our mortification, and ceasing from sin, a planting of us into the death of Christ; and our vivification, and living unto God, a planting of us into his Resurrection*. A Christian must be engrafted into these two Stocks, Christ's Death, and Christ's Resurrection, and draw and suck the sap of Grace from these two roots; or he will never be sanctified.

For the words themselves, they are part of an History of Christ's solemn entering into the Temple, and reforming the Abuses of it; and he doth it in the Spirit of a true Reformer, with much zeal, and with as much moderation. He casts out the Abuses; but doth not forbid the Duties of the Temple. He whips out the Merchants, but not the Ministers of the House of God: Overthrows the Tables of the Money-changers; but ransacks not the Treasury of the Temple: nay, he countenances that, and gave encouragement to it, Mark. xii.

Here is now fulfilled in the History, what was formerly foretold in the Prophecy, Hag. ii. 7. *The desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory*. That Prediction hath here its accomplishment. *The Lord is in his holy Temple. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple, saith Malachy, iii. 1*. And he comes like Refiner's fire, and like Fuller's soap: The Refiners fire, to consume the dross

Serm. IV. dross, not to destroy the metal; like Fuller's soap, to fetch out the stains, but not to eat out the substance, and make spoil of all. And our Saviour, meeting with opposition in this harsh, but holy work, and questioned by the *Jews*, by what authority he did these things, he returns them this Answer, as the Seal and Warrant of his Power and Authority: *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

For the Words themselves, we will take them into a twofold Consideration.

First, Let us consider them in their Purpose, and Intendment, as they stand in connexion, and relation to the *Jews* Objection.

Secondly, We will consider them absolutely in themselves, and in their several Particulars.

First, For their Purpose and Connexion, it stands thus. Our Saviour observing the many abuses and prophanations of the Temple, his Spirit was stirred within him, and he casts out the defilements, and pollutions of that holy place. The *Jews*, though they were much offended at this strange reformation (a redress of abuses in God's worship, especially if it crosses our ease, or our profit, as this did, is usually distastful) yet, being awed with the Majesty of this great work, they durst not oppose, or resist it openly; but secretly they malign it, and they desire to see Christ's Warrant, and Commission, and call for a Sign, and Miracle to Authorize it. They discover their old, inveterate disease of Infidelity; nothing is well done with them without a Miracle. St. Paul tells us of this humour of theirs, 1 Cor. i. 22. *The Jews require a Sign.* Why, what needs a Sign?

First, The work speaks for it self; such shameful abuse of God's House, whose heart could endure it, that hath any zeal for God?

Secondly, How many Prophets have they had, that came to reform them, and yet wrought no Miracle?

Thirdly, The work it self was a wonderfull Miracle; that one mean contemptible man, in outward appearance, by himself alone, without any assistance, should affright, and drive away so great a multitude, and none dare to gain-say him. St. Hierom saith, " 'Tis one of the greatest Miracles that Christ wrought in all the Gospel, this casting out of Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. Yet see, these obstinate *Jews* must have another Miracle to make this good; and accordingly, Christ returns them this answer, assures them of this Sign, and Wonder: *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*

And this Answer which he gives, this Sign he foretells them of, 'tis many ways considerable.

I. 'Tis *Responsum obscurum*; a sign very darkly, and obscurely propounded to them. He speaks of his Death, and Resurrection; but not clearly, and plainly; but wraps up his meaning in much obscurity. Not that our Saviour meant to deceive them with an *Æquivocation*; as the Masters of that Lying Art do prophanely affirm. One of themselves, Cardinal Tolet, frees this Speech from that lewd imputation. He supposes that Christ by some gesture, pointed to himself; not to the material Temple. But yet the speech had it's obscurity.

1. It was the Oeconomy and dispensation, which Christ observed in making known these Mysteries concerning himself. He did it with some reservedness, and touch of obscurity, as most conducing to his great work of our Redemption by his Death and Passion. When he had drawn from St. Peter that noble confession, that he was the Christ, Matth. xvi. 16. he charged his Disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ, Verse 20. Had the carnal *Jews* been persuaded of that, they would have expected a temporal Kingdom, which would have been contrary to his Death and Passion. It was St. Peter's Error; he confesses our Saviour to be the Christ; and therefore he thinks he must not suffer death; O Master, far be it from thee. But then,

2. The obscurity of this Answer was in *pœnam infidelitatis*, as a just punishment for their Unbelief. 'Tis the reward of an unbelieving heart, of a quarrelling, and gain-saying, and contradicting spirit; either God will not answer their cavilling Questions; or, if he answers them, they shall not understand him. An humble, and a teachable spirit shall receive instruction; but an unbelieving heart shall be left

lete in blindness. The Oracles of Religion shall be Riddles to them. Thus Christ *Serm. IV.* shews the different ways of expressing himself, *Matth. xiii.* The Apostles ask him: *Why he spake to the Jews in Parables? Because, saith he, 'tis given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; but to them 'tis not given: They seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.* O, take heed of a cavilling spirit in matters of God; they that will not believe, shall not understand; the Gospel, *tho' it is all light to the Saints, is all darkness to them.* As that Pillar in the wilderness, 'twas light to the *Israelites*; but to the *Egyptians*, darkness. That's the first, *Responsum elucrum*, This answer of Christ.

II. 'Twas *Responsum dilatorium*, a dilatory Answer: the Promise of a sign, not forthwith to be fulfilled, but to be done hereafter.

1. 'Tis not unusual with God to refer the faith of his people to signs and tokens, that are afterwards to be performed. Such a sign he gave to *Moses*, *Exod. iii. 12.* *This shall be a token unto thee, when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this Mountain.* Such a sign he gave to *Abaz*; such a sign to *Hezekiah*, that he should be delivered from the host of the *Assyrians*: He will make good his present promises by after-seals, and confirmations to come.

2. He refers them to his Resurrection, as to the great sign and testimony concerning himself. His other Miracles, they were but preparative signs, in respect of this, to make them listen to his Doctrine: but his Resurrection, that was the grand Sign; that he was the Mediatour, and Redeemer. *God having raised up his Son, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities, Acts iii. 26.* Till then, Christ was more sparing of his miraculous manifestations of himself. His Transfiguration, he commands his Disciples to tell no man of, till after his Resurrection. Before that, in his life-time, he wrought but few Conversions; but after his Resurrection, then multitudes were saved. *Except the Wheat-corn fall into the ground, and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit, Joh. xii. 24.* *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me, Verse 32.* He refers himself to that time. *When you have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he, Joh. viii. 28.* The Centurion could guess at his Deity, not only through his Humanity, but also through his misery, and mortality; *Surely, this man was the Son of God*; but his Resurrection, that publicly proclaimed him to be the Son of God. An oppressed, and suffering King, is to be acknowledged a King: much more a victorious and triumphant King. *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the Resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4.* Christ pitches upon this sign, rather than upon a sign from Heaven. The sign of the Prophet *Jonas*, none like to that. *As Jonas was three nights, and three days, in the Whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be — Let one rise from the dead, saith Drives, and they will believe.* See, Christ is risen from the dead. His Resurrection, 'tis Faith's great Confirmation.

III. His Resurrection, 'twas *signum confundens*; 'twas a sign to the *Jews* of greatest conviction, and confusion. They feared this sign above all; they took notice of it, and laid it up against a rainy day; as malice never wants memory. When Christ spake plainly to his Disciples of his Resurrection, they knew not *what the rising from the dead should mean, Mark x. 10.* And when they were told *he was risen*, it seemed a Fable to them, they *believed it not, Luke xxiv. 11.* But his enemies could talk of it, and upbraid him with it, and laboured by all means to hinder it. "Sir, say they to *Pilate*, this deceiver said, he would rise again the third day: if that should prove so, we were all undone, the last error would be worse than the first. When they had him in his grave, they would make sure to prevent it; as *Joseph's Brethren*, "Let's make him away, and see what will come of his dreams. Afterwards, when they saw *Joseph* advanced to all that glory, how were they abashed? To have crucified, dead, and buried *Jesus* rise again, to break thorow all their lets, and hindrances, 'tis a confounding sign to those unbelieving *Jews*. When they had imprisoned the Apostles, and made them sure, and yet the next day found them in the Temple, they were all dismayed at it, *Acts v.* It amaz'd them to hear, *The men whom ye put in prison, are standing in the Temple.* How much more were they confounded in themselves to find him raised up in glory, whom the other day they buried

Serm. IV. buried in ignominy? In his passion he confuted them by those glimpses of glory, that even then appeared in him; but in his Resurrection, he confounded them. In his Passion, they fell upon this stone, and were sore bruised by falling on him; but, in his Resurrection, this stone fell upon them, and ground them all to powder.

That's the first Consideration of the Words, as they stand in relation to the Jews Question.

Secondly, Let's consider the words absolutely in themselves. And out of them three things offer themselves to our consideration.

First, Is the State and Dignity of Christ's holy Body, and Humanity; 'tis a Temple.

Secondly, Is the Violence, and Indignity, that was offered to it, at his Death, and Passion; 'twas *solutum*. This Temple, 'twas pulled down, and destroyed.

Thirdly, Is the Repairing, and Restauration, and raising up of this Temple, out of the ruins of it, by his Resurrection; that's in these words, *I will raise it up in three days*.

And these three Particulars present unto us three great Mysteries of our Christian Faith.

First, Here is the Mystery of our Saviours Incarnation, by his assuming to himself the Nature of man. He made it a Temple.

Secondly, Here is the Mystery of his Cross, and Passion; this Temple was destroyed.

Thirdly, Here is the Mystery of his glorious Resurrection; He reedified, and raised up this ruined Temple in three days.

First, Here is *Solomon's Temple*; nay, here is a greater than *Solomon's*, and a more holy Temple, the Temple of Christ's Body.

Secondly, Here is *Nebuchadnezzar's* destroying the Temple; nay, a greater destruction: the fabrick of Christ's holy Temple is here ruined and destroy'd.

Thirdly, Here is *Zerubbabel's* repair of the Temple; nay, a greater than *Zerubbabel's*, and a more glorious restauration, in this raising it up in three days. The

First thing considerable in the State of Christ's Body, and Humanity, 'tis a Temple. Saint John expounds our Saviour's speech so, *Vers. 21. He spake of the Temple of his Body*. And Christ's Body was in a special, and peculiar manner, a Temple. Indeed, the bodies of the Saints have this honourable Title ascribed to them; and the Church of God, the body of Christians, that holy fellowship, and society of Saints, that's God's Temple likewise.

I. The Bodies of God's Saints are called Temples; they are made after the similitude of a Temple, *1 Cor. iii. 16. Know ye not, that ye are the Temples of God?* And again, *1 Cor. vi. 19. Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?*

II. The Church and People of God, the Company and Congregation of Christians, that's a Temple too. Thus St. Paul tells the Church of *Corinth*, (*2 Cor. vi. 16.*) *Ye are the Temple of the living God; God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People*. Thus St. John calls the Church, *the Tabernacle of God*; Behold, saith he, *the Tabernacle of God is amongst men*, *Rev. xxi. 3.* And St. Peter shews us the manner, and materials of this holy Fabrick, *1. Pet. ii. 5. Ye, as lively Stones, are built up a spiritual house*. Every Christian is a precious Stone to make up this Building.

But Christ in a more eminent manner is called a Temple. Christians are Temples, and Houses of God; because God dwells in them by communication of Grace; the Holy Ghost takes possession of them, by inspiring, and working in them those gracious and heavenly qualities, and endowments, by which they are sanctified. But Christ's Humanity is God's Temple, by a substantial inhabitation. The God-head, and Divinity of Christ dwells in his Humanity immediately, and personally, not only by the Infusion of Grace, and holy inspiration. Thus Paul expresses it, *Coloss. ii. 9. In him dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily*; that is, really, fully, substantially, by the nearest union, as the Soul dwells in the body by an intimate conjunction. God dwells in his Church, as a King dwells in his Kingdom, amongst all his Subjects, by the gracious influence of his Regal Authority; but he dwells in Christ's Humanity, as a King in his Royal Palace, by his personal

personal residence. He dwells in his Church, as the Sun is present in the air by influence, and shedding forth into it his Beams of light: but he dwells in Christ, as the Sun doth in the Heavens; *There is a Tabernacle for the Sun in the heavens*; by a bodily union.

More particularly, Christ's Humanity represents God's Temple; his holy Body was the true Antitype of the Temple of *Jerusalem*, and prefigured by it. The Apostle in the ninth to the *Hebrews*, makes Christ to be the Mystery that was shadowed forth by that material Tabernacle, and outward Sanctuary. And the similitude, and agreement of these two, will appear in these resemblances.

1. They were both alike in the building; both by God's immediate, and special direction. For the Tabernacle, God himself gave the pattern and model of it to *Moses*; and the Temple afterwards, the line and level by which it was fashioned, was the *Spirit of Prophecy*. *David* and *Nathan*, they cast the frame of it by special Inspiration; and surely, so was the Temple of Christ's holy Body built, and contrived. The Holy Ghost was the *Work-man*. He inspired *Bezaleel* and *Hiram* to build the Tabernacle and Temple; and 'twas his overshadowing of the blessed Virgin, that framed, and fashioned this blessed Edifice. He ordered every Particular, Time, and Place, and Person; the whole frame of this sacred Pile of Christ's body was from the Holy Ghost. 'Tis eminently true of him, He was born *not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, *Jo. i. 13*.

2. Christ's holy Body was like that goodly Temple in the Ornaments, that did beautifie it. That Temple was overlaid with Gold; and the Temple of Christ's Humanity was richly furnished, and adorned with that which was more precious than the gold of *Ophir*, the glorious endowments of all Heavenly graces. And Grace, 'tis of more value, than the wedge of gold. And those graces in Christ were in the fullest manner, in the highest perfection: not as grace is in us, thin-laid on, like your leaf-gold; but massie, and substantial, the perfection of all grace did enrich his Soul.

And as all the ornaments, so those sacred Vessels of the Temple, those mysterious Utensils, with which it was furnished, are all fulfilled and accomplished in him. In Christ was the true Propitiatory, and Mercy-seat; in him were the Tables of the Law, the full knowledge of them; and the exact performance of them in him was that *Pot of Manna*, that *food of Angels*, that *Bread of life*, which came down from Heaven; in him was *Aaron's Rod*, with *ripe Almonds*, the Seal of his high Priesthood, not fading, but flourishing, and for ever continuing.

3. Christ's holy body was like that sacred Temple, in those religious services, which were performed, and accomplished in that holy place. All the Offices, and Functions of the Temple, are fulfilled in Christ.

(1.) In the Temple there was a standing and constant Oracle, from whence the People of God received all their Directions. From *between the Cherubims* God uttered his voice, and acquainted them with his Counsels upon all occasions. Answerably; in Christ's Humanity dwelt the true, and living Oracle of Heaven. He is the great *Counsellor* of his Church, *Isai. ix. 6*. The Oracle of Wisdom; *All the treasures of Wisdom, and Knowledge are in him*, *Coloss. ii. 3*. He *makes us wise to salvation*.

(2.) In the Temple was the Altar of Sacrifice for Expiation. The Attonement for sin, was in the Temple. And that sacred Mystery was abundantly fulfilled in this Temple of Christ. In his Humanity was offered up the great propitiation for the whole world. *His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, *1 Pet. ii. 24*. *By his own blood he entered into the holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*, *Heb. ix. 12*. *Verè Templum Dei, corpus Christi, in quo nostrorum purificatio peccatorum*. *Ambros.*

(3.) The Temple, that was the House of Prayer. In it, or towards it, all Prayers were to be made; there was the Altar of Incense, that perfumed their Prayers. And Christ fully answers this Duty of the Temple.

2. His own personal Prayers in the days of his Flesh, how did they ascend like pillars of perfume into the nostrils of God? He sent up strong prayers and supplications. And then,

1. For our Prayers; they must all be made in, or towards this Temple, or they find no acceptance. His spirit must inspire them, his Name must authorise them, his Merit must perfume them, his Intercession must recommend them to God's acceptance. Prayer stretches out its hand to Christ, as the Jews towards the Temple:

Serm. IV. Hear, thou that dwellest between the Cherubims. Our Faith must look upon him as the only *Crucifix*, to quicken our devotion. That's the *First*, he is *Templum*. Now follows,

Secondly, The Indignity that was offered to this Temple, it was destroyed. And the Allusion holds good in this particular, betwixt Christ's holy body, and the *Jews* Temple. That material Temple was pulled down, and defaced, and all the beauty of it laid in the dust, and Christ's holy Body met with the like usage. *Destruunt veritatem, ut conservent umbram*. The *Jews*, zealous forsooth of the other Temple, were most malicious against the Temple of Christ's Body: as fast as they cryed up the one, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, Jerem. vii. 4. so fast they cryed down the other, *Crucifige him, crucifige him; Down with it, even to the ground*. And so we are now to come to his Death and Passion, expressed in this word, *Solvite*, or *Destruite*, Undo, or Destroy. And it shews the death and suffering of our Saviour in these particulars.

I. It shews the Nature of his Passion; it was a Dissolution, a full, compleat death and destruction. Indeed, Death 'tis called a *dissolution*, and so was his; a fundering and severing of all the parts of this holy Fabrick. Death, 'tis a parting of soul and body. Thus *Paul* expresses it, *Philip. i. 23. I desire to be dissolved*: and *2 Cor. v. 1. When the earthly house of our Tabernacle shall be dissolved*. Death is a dissolution, not an extinction, or annihilation; it severs soul from body, but doth not utterly abolish them: like an house pulled down, but the materials laid up, not wasted and consumed. The soul returns to God, that gave it; and the body, that's reserved to its proper receptacle. Christ's soul, that was in Paradise, and his body likewise, was in its Paradise, in *Joseph's* Garden, where he made his Sepulchre.

II. His Death, 'tis a dissolution of the Temple: it reached no further than to his Humanity, there's the Extension of it. Death did part his soul from his body, and that was all. But there was a close union, which no violence of Death could dissolve, the union of his God-head with his Man-hood. That was an union incapable of dissolution or destruction. His Incarnation admits of no dissolution: his Deity was united to his soul and body, when by death they were parted from themselves. His soul departed, that was the soul of the Son of God; his body interred in the grave, it was the body of the Son of God. *Quod semel assumpsit, nunquam deposuit*. His God-head supported his soul in *triduo mortis*, and embalmed his body when it lay in the grave; as a man drawing a Sword out of a Scabbard, holds the Sword in one hand, and the Scabbard in the other; they are asunder in themselves, but both are held, and supported by the same man.

III. *Dissolvite, Destroy this Temple*; they were to do it: it shews us the kind, and manner of his death, it was to be violent. Christ's death was not to be a natural death, but violent and enforced. *St. Paul* calls it not *θανάτω*, but *βίβρωσι*, not a *dying*, but a *slaying*; *2 Cor. iv. 10. This Temple of Christ's body dropt not down of it self, by the decays of Nature; but violent hands of wicked men defaced it, and pulled it down*. Christ's death was to be a sacrifice; and they were not to bring to God's Altar that which was sick, or died of it self: The sacrifice was to be slain, and violently destroyed; so was our Saviour delivered into the hands of wicked men; he died in the fashion of a Malefactor; he was slain by the Law, wickedly, if ye respect men; but upon God's gracious design, he suffered death in the place, and stead of us, as our surety and ransom.

IV. *Destroy it*; it sounds like a Concession, but it amounts to no more than a voluntary Permission. *Destroy it*; 'tis not a word of command, but of free sufferance, and permission; not as the false witnesses deposed, *Thou, that destroyest the Temple of God, and buildest it up in three days*; no, Christ was no destroyer of Temples. 'Tis but a speech of permission: and that not *permissio juris*, a grant of Allowance, as if he had given them good leave to do it, and so they might do it lawfully; nor was it *permissio impunitatis*, a permission of Connivence, to do it upon promise of impunity. No, let these, and such as these destroyers, be sure God will reckon with them for it: but 'tis *permissio facti*, a sufferance of the fact only. He will not hinder them from doing it, nor restrain their violence and malice in acting of it. And that's all that wicked destroyers can say for themselves, God permits them to prosper in their wicked designs;

designs; well, that will breed them but cold comfort at the day of reckoning.

And, as it was a permission, so 'tis a voluntary Permission; otherwise Christ would have avoided it. He that drove out the profaners of his other Temple, could as easily have driven back the destroyers of this Temple. Christ assures us of this: no man could take away his Life against his will. He *had power to lay it down*. Till his hour came, he disappointed all their attempts; when his hour was come, he puts himself into their hands, yielded to their fury, submitted to his death. Other-wise, all the Angels of Heaven would have come to rescue him. It sets out his Charity, thus to be willing to die for us; it makes his death meritorious, and of high price with God, to die in Charity to us, in Obedience to his Father, in Patience and pity to his Tormentors. He was not like the Ram caught in the Briars, and seized upon for a Sacrifice: but like obedient *Isaac*, bearing the wood of his Sacrifice, not struggling or resisting.

V. It shews the Extremity of his death; *Destroy this Temple*: and so they did with all rage, and cruelty; they did not take down this Temple, but threw it down, as *David* describes the defacing of the material Temple, *they brake it down with axes and hammers*, Psal. lxxiv. 6. *Jonas* (the Type of his Death and Resurrection) found far better usage than Christ did; the Mariners that flung him over-board, did it unwillingly, and with much reluctance: but our Destroyers here used all kind of cruelty they put him to a shameful, a painful, a tormenting death. We read in the story of his Passion, of Whips, and Thorns, and Nails, and Spears, the Instruments of cruelty were used about him. *They pierced his hands, and his feet, they might tell all his bones*, they rack'd him so upon the Cross. Woful was the spectacle of this glorious Temple; the pillars of it wept like the Marble, the beams of it bled like the Vine, streams of Blood flowed from this Sanctuary, like *Ezekiel's* Waters from the material Sanctuary.

We have seen the ruine and destruction of this Temple; Come we now, *Thirdly*, To the repairing, and Re-edifying of it in his glorious Resurrection; *I will raise it up in three days*. I, here is the triumph of Christ over their malice. The more malicious they were in his Destruction, the more glorious doth he appear in his Resurrection. Thus, *The rage of men shall turn to thy praise*. Let them bind him with these cords of death, as they did *Samson* with their strong bands; see how easily he snaps them asunder. He died as a Lamb, but he arose as a Lyon; This *David* prophecyed of, Psal. xvi. 9, 10. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; because thou wilt not leave thine Holy One to see corruption*.

Look to the Particulars, *Excitabo*:

- I. Here is the Agent, and Author of it, *I*.
- II. Here is the subject Matter to be wrought upon, *It*.
- III. Here is the State of Recovery, *I will raise it*.
- IV. Here is the Set time prefix'd, *In three days*.

I. Here is the Agent, and author, *I*. He himself will raise this Temple, revive his own body, not another shall do it for him. To raise a dead man to life, is a strange work, unheard of in all the whole compass of Nature. Pull down Temples we may, and build them up again; but who ever raised a dead man after his dissolution? But yet, 'tis much more for a dead man to raise himself. The Scripture tells us of dead men raised by others; but none but Christ ever raised himself. It clearly shews us, that Christ was more than man. It was in the power of his God-head to raise himselfe out of the Grave. *He had power to lay down his life, and he had power to take it up again*, John x. 18. This is the Prerogative of Christ: He hath life in himself, *He is the Resurrection and the life*, John xi. 25. *a quickning spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. As the Sun in the Firmament sets of it self, and rises of it self, *rejoices as a Gyant to run his course*. The Jews cannot say, *He raised others from the dead, himself he cannot raise*.

II. See here the subject matter, 'tis *It*; the self-same Temple: 'tis *ταυτο*, though not *τοαυτο*. He doth not say, *Pull down this Temple, and I will build another*; but *I will rear up the same again*. Hew down the Pillars, scatter the Stones, I will put them together again. Not a Pin or a Peg of this Temple shall be missing. Indeed, this is properly a Resurrection, when the same thing that fell, is set up again, not another in the stead of it. Other-wise, the assuming of a new body had been another In-

Serm. IV. carnation, not a Resurrection. That body which was a Temple for God's grace to dwell in, that same body must be the Temple, and habitation of his glory: that body, the sanctified Instrument of so many good works, the same body must be raised into the fellowship of reward: that body, that suffered those pains, and tortures, must be repaired with beauty and glory. That body, that was pierced and wounded, that same *thuribulum perforatum*, must appear before God in Heaven, representing the glorious price of our Redemption.

III. See the state and pitch of this Recovery, it shall be raised up. 'Tis not a partial repair; but a compleat and perfect one. *Zerubbabel* shall lay the foundation of this Temple, and his hands shall finish it.

1. It was a substantial Repair. See me, saith our Saviour, after his Resurrection; nay feel, and handle me, you shall find no imaginary and phantastical, but a real, substantial body.

2. It was an entire Repair, nothing wanting to the perfection of it. They raised *Solomon's* Temple after the destruction; but the Cherubims, and the Ark, and other precious parcels could never be renewed. Here is all in Christ, no excellency is wanting in him.

3. It is a glorious Repair; not like *Zerubbabel's* Temple, they wept to see it come so far short of the former Temple. Nay, verily the glory of this Temple of Christ's Body doth far exceed its former glory. *It was sown in weakness, but raised in power, clothed with immortality, impassibility*: infinite beauty and glory are the fruits and accomplishments of his Resurrection. *When shall he die, and his name perish?* say his Enemies in the *Psalms*. Whereas, after his death, he and his Name is much more glorious. *He hath now a name above every name.*

IV. He pitches them a certain time, and that a very short and speedy one, *Within three days*. They shall soon see how vain all their attempts and practices against him will prove. He doth not like that grand Impostour, *Mahomet*, that set so many hundreds of years for his return to his seduced Miscreants, and tires out their expectation with his delays: Or, as the *Jews*, who to excuse the absence of their long-looked-for *Messias*, mis-interpret those words of the *Psalmist*, *They slander the footsteps of God's anointed*; applying it to them that say, *Their Messias is very slow paced in coming to them*. No, here is a short, compendious time; and they shall find his Resurrection accomplished. He prefixes the space of three days.

1. It is for more Infallibility and Certainty. He foretells punctual circumstances of time, and place, and accurately fulfills it. He had set a certain time for bringing his People out of the *Egyptian* bondage, and the self-same day he wrought their deliverance.

2. This space of three days is set, to shew the Speediness of his Resurrection; sooner he could not well be conceived to be dead and buried, and past all hope, as his Enemies would have it.

3. The shortness of the time shews *facilitatem Operis*, the wonderful Ease, and Facility, he used in this great work of raising himself. *Three days* are as much as *three thousand* to Omnipotency. Especially he takes a short time, for raising and building up again. Men can pull down apace, but they are not so speedy in setting up any good. *On the contrary*, saith *Chrysostom*, *God was but six days in making the whole World*; and yet he took seven days in destroying of *Jericho*.

Within three days he rose again. Yea, it was so speedy, and quick, that pieces of days are reckoned for whole ones. *Ultima pars primæ, & prima pars ultimæ diei*. That's a sign of great power; *Maximum opus minimo tempore conficere*. To do a great work in a little time, argues great Power. *Christus de sepulchro, tanquam de lecto, surrexit*; August. *I laid me down, and slept, and rose again*. Who ever awaked out of sleep more easily? Nature must move by length and leisure, according to the time of life; as the Scripture speaks: *sed nescit tarda molimina virtus Spiritus Sancti*. God can effect great things easily.

We will close up all with a double Application:

First, More particular, for every man to himself.

Secondly, More common and general, to the whole Church of God.

First, This *Text* is applicable to our selves, in each particular of it:

First,

First, Is Christ's Body a Temple? So should ours be too; Temples and houses for God to dwell in. St. Paul catechises the *Corinthians* in this Truth, with a check to those that are ignorant of it, or never consider it; *What, know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost?* 1 Cor. vi. 19. If you understand not this, you neither know God, nor your selves, nor the condition of a Christian. Serm. IV.

And to the being of a Temple, three things are required:

1. There is required an Appropriation, and Dedication of that, which must be a Temple, to God's service and honour. A Temple belongs only to the true and living God. No Creature is capable of the honour to have a Temple built to it; Temples, and Altars, and Sacrifices are Prerogatives belonging to God only. "No man, saith *Augustine*, erects a Temple to any, nisi quem, aut credidit, aut putavit, aut finxit Deum; unless he thought him, or imagined him to be a God. Are our souls and bodies Temples? then they must be appropriated to this high service of honouring and worshipping of God. Our bodies are framed, not like some *Abolom's* Pillar, for shew, or ostentation; but like *Jacob's* Pillar, *Gen. xxviii. 22.* This Pillar (saith *Jacob*) that I have set up, shall be God's house, the place of his Honour, the House of his Worship. 'Tis a debauching of our Nature, a frustrating of our End, a defrauding of our God, to con-
 ceit our selves made for other ends and employments than the service of God.

2. To the being of a Temple, besides the dedication, there is required an actual Consecration. *Solomon* did dedicate the Temple, when he undertook the building of it; but when it was built, he after made a solemn and religious Consecration of it. Consecration gives God *Livery* and *Seisin*, and actual possession of us. What is our baptism, but the hallowing, and consecrating of our souls and bodies to the service of God? As the Tabernacle was consecrated by the sprinkling of blood; so are our souls and bodies, by that holy sprinkling sanctified, and set apart, to be God's Houses and Temples. By that mystical Consecration, we invite him to enter in, and to dwell in us! *Arise thou, Lord, into thy resting place, thou, and the Ark of thy strength;* "Say of my soul and body, *Here will I dwell, for I have a delight in it.*

3. Are our Bodies dedicated and consecrated to be Temples to God? Let them then be Temples to God by actual employment of them, as his Temples. Let his worship be there constantly maintained. Be careful, that thy Morning and Evening Sacrifices of Prayer be duly performed. Let his Word dwell plenteously in thee. Thy soul must be *Arca Testamenti*; as the Ark, in which the Tables of the Law were laid up and preserved. Above all, be sure thou do not prophane the Temple of God; make not God's Temple an ordinary house, all for secular employments; turn it not into shops, or ware-houses. We cry shame! to see a Church turned into a Barn or Stable; to see a Christian all for the World, is no better sight: much less, make not this House of God a Den of thieves, a Brothel-house of uncleanness, an Hog-sty for worldly and sensual pleasures, a Cage for unclean birds. Thus *Augustine* debates this point with prophane men; "Say not, thy body 'tis but dust and ashes; no matter how thou usest it; No, (saith he) our bodies are Members of Christ, Temples of the Holy Ghost; *Quid horum in te contemnis? Christum, cujus membra es; an Spiritum Sanctum, cujus templum es?* What, (saith he) despise you Christ, whose Member thou art; or the Holy Ghost, whose Temple thou art?

Secondly, As our Bodies are Temples, which is their Dignity; so we must look for a dissolution of them, which is our Frailty. Death will down with them all. All these houses of God must one day be battered down; they must all be brought to the dust of Death. 'Twas St. *Augustin's* Meditation a little before his death, *Cadunt ligna, & lapides, & moriuntur mortales*; Timber and Stones will decay, and come to ruine, and mortal men must submit to mortality. Indeed, as our bodies are Temples, for their use; so they are but Tabernacles, for their strength and consistence. St. Paul, and St. Peter, calls them but Tabernacles; and Tabernacles or Tents have but weak foundations, soon removed, easily pulled down. A Cake of Barly-bread tumbled down the Tent of the *Midianites*, and overturned it, that it lay all along, *Judg. vii. 13.* Less than so, even a crumb of bread may destroy the Tent, and Tabernacle of our bodies, and so lay them in the dust.

Thirdly, But then, here is our comfort; these Temples of ours shall be raised up

Serm. IV. up again: 'Twill be a ruine of a few days; there will come a repair, and restoration. In death, saith St. Paul, *Peregrinamur à corpore*, we are by death *Pilgrims from our body*; and what saith Tertullian? *Qui peregrinatur, revertetur in domicilium*: A Traveller means to return again to his house and abode. The Holy Ghost must have his Temple restored to him. Christ's Resurrection shall work our Resurrection; *Because I live, you shall live also*; John xiv. 19. *Resurget in membris, qui resurrexit in capite*. The Head is already raised, and that will raise up the whole body. This hope should comfort us against the fear of death. *Sub tali spe, non debet esse triste Templum Dei*, saith Augustine.

Secondly, For the Church of God, that hath its share in this Application.

First, 'Tis the Temple of God; the place where his honour dwells. All other Temples, are Synagogues of Satan; but the Church, 'tis the Temple of the living God; and *I will dwell in them, and walk in them*. All other Temples are Temples of dead Idols; we are the Temple of the living God. Idols are set up in their Temples; but there they stand, and stir not; *They have feet, but they walk not*: But God dwells in his Church, and walks in it, visits, and converses with it.

Secondly, Then there is a Dissolution and Ruine may befall the Temple. The Church of Christ hath enemies, that will put hard to it, to lay it as low as ever the Temple was, and set up the *Abomination of desolation in the holy place*: there may come a *Babylonish* captivity, and ruine of God's People.

Thirdly, But then here is our comfort, there will come a raising again of all these ruines. Let them do their worst, when they think they have wasted all, yet what saith God? *Mine own will I bring again, as I did once from the depth of the Sea*. Though we be slain all the day long, yet *we shall be more than Conquerours*. The Jews, to preserve their Typical Temple, they destroy the true Temple; but what saith Chrysostome? *Not a stone was left upon a stone of their material Temple; but, for the spiritual Temple, that's built on a Rock, no prevailing against it*. Pharaoh could not hinder the encrease of the *Hebrews*, for all his Persecutions. The Church shall have a Resurrection out of all persecutions. 'Tis that hope, with which the Prophet *Hosea* comforts God's People in all their afflictions, and let it be our comfort; Chap. vi. 1, 2. *Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up: After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight*.

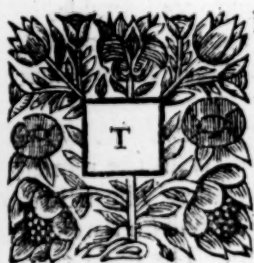
ON

ON EASTER-DAY,

The Fifth Sermon.

St. MARK xvi. 7.

But go your way, tell his Disciples and Peter, that he goes before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him; as he said unto you.



THE Text, 'tis the first joyful tidings that came to the Church of God, of our Saviour's Resurrection; the first blessed news of Christ's Triumphant Victory over Death and the Grave, and thereby of his restoring of us to life and immortality. When the four Lepers found the Armies of the Syrians, the enemies of God's people vanquished, and fled, and chased away, *2 King. vii.* and all their goods left to the spoil, they said one to another, *Verse 9. This is a day of good tidings, come, that we may go tell the King's household of it.* This day Satan and the Powers of Hell, all the enemies of our Salvation, were vanquished and subdued by Christ's Resurrection; the hold and trefes of Death, the Grave, was spoil'd and ransack'd, the gates and bars of Hell broken in pieces; Our *Samson* hath taken the gates of the *Philistines* on his shoulders, and carried them away. Surely, this is a day of joyful tidings; let it be told to the King's household, published in the Church of God; *Say unto Sion, Behold, thy God reigneth, he hath triumphed gloriously, he hath led Captivity captive; the horse, and the rider, that pale horse, and Death riding on him, Rev. vi. 8. hath he slain in the battel.*

You see the purpose of the Text, 'tis the happy tidings of our Saviour's Resurrection. And in it take notice of these particulars;

First, Is the present and speedy Dispatch of these Tidings, *But go your way.* Secondly, Is the Persons to whom these Tidings are directed, *Tell his Disciples and Peter.*

Thirdly, Is the Sum of the Message, the News to be imparted, *He goes before you into Galilee, there you shall see him.*

Fourthly, Is the Certainty, and Confirmation, and Assurance of it, *As he said unto you.*

First, Is the Dispatch of this Message; and that seems very hasty, and somewhat abrupt: it begins here with a word of Diversion, *But.* Why so? Were they in the wrong way? or in any unwarrantable employment? Just now, in the former Verse, he bids them *Come, and see the place, behold the Sepulchre, where the Lord was laid,* and from whence he was risen: Why doth he now presently remove them from it, not let them stay, and take their fill of that joyful Vision? When this Grave received the dead body of Christ, they beheld it with sorrow; now it hath yielded up the living body of Christ, pity it were, they were not suffered to behold it with joy. Besides, that this diversion gave a check to that over-humane, and passionate, and even superstitious affectation of visiting the places of Christ's Birth, Passion, and Resurrection, which after-times accounted an high piece of Devotion.

Serm. V.

votion. 'Tis said of *Hilarion*, he went once to *Hierusalem* to see those Monuments of Christ's Death and Passion; but he went no more: he made no practice of it, placed no piety in it. So here, the Angel allows them a sight of the sepulchre, to confirm their Faith; but withall he dismisses them presently, suffers them not to fix their devotion upon it. Besides this Reason, the Angel is thus quick and speedy in his diversion, *But go your way*: to teach us, that even the spiritual delights of Contemplation must give way to religious and pious Actions. Their Piety in meditating on his Resurrection, must give way to their Charity, in imparting it to others. Our Personal Devotion must yield to our Compassion; and what comforts we have tasted, we must not engross them to our selves, but communicate to others. The care that we must take of others' afflictions, must make us abate even of our own consolations. St. Paul can be content to *stay out of Heaven* to be serviceable to the Church, *Phil. i. 23*. He is the best servant, not that delights to stand in his Master's presence, but that carefully minds, and diligently goes about his Master's business. *If thou lovest me, feed my sheep. Probatio dilectionis est exhibitio operis*. St. Paul shews us the good use we must make of our comforts, *2 Cor. i. 6*. *God comfort us, that we may be able to comfort others by the comforts wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

For the Dispatch of this Message, here are two Things considerable.

The first is, *A quo*, From whom this Message is sent; that's an Angel. He himself was a Messenger posted from Heaven to acquaint the Church with this blessed news.

The second is, *Per quos*, By whom the Angel conveys this news; 'tis by those holy, devout Women, that came to the Sepulchre, early in the morning.

First, The first thing considerable is, *A quo*, from whom it comes. The first news of Christ's Resurrection is sent by an Angel. Surely good news will find welcome, let the Messenger be what he will be, though never so mean. The good tidings of escape and freedom from enemies, was welcome News to *Samaria*, though four foul Lepers brought it to them. *How beautiful are the feet of those that bring glad tidings of good things?* *Rom. x. 15*. We would kiss the very feet of a joyful Messenger. But yet we see this Message is not posted by an ordinary conveyance: but a choice Embassadour, one of the most honourable Peers in the Court of Heaven, a glorious Angel is employed in the delivery of it; for divers congruities.

I. Ob summam dignitatem. It becomes the excellency of this great work of Christ's Resurrection to be attended and published by the Ministry of Angels. 'Tis an high preferment even for the glorious Angels to celebrate this great Triumph of our blessed Saviour. No doubt, all the Angels in Heaven had an holy ambition to be employed about it, they wondred at the Glory of it. Thus the Fathers represent the heavenly Angels magnifying Christ at his Resurrection, and Ascension, in *Isaiah's* words, *Chap. iii. 1*. *Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed Garments from Bozra? this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, with his garments dipt in blood, mighty to save?*

The reviving of the Son of God out of his grave, these glad tidings, the greatest Arch-angel is desirous to publish it. *Joab* would not let *Abimaz* carry tidings into the City, because the King's son was dead. This day the Son of God hath overcome death, and is revived. Indeed he was hung on a tree, and thrust thorow with darts, and a heap of stones cast upon him; but he is risen and revived: the most glorious Angel desires to report it. See how triumphantly the Angel appears, in his garments white as Snow, shining like the Sun, clad in his richest robes of glory. Indeed all Creatures celebrate this joyful day. As at his Death and Passion there was a great Earthquake; the earth trembled for fear and horror: so now, at his Resurrection, there was again a great Earthquake. This last, 'twas not *motus tremoris* but *exultationis*; a motion of exultation and gladness. *Tremble thou earth for horror at the death of thy Lord: Leap, and skip, and dance for joy, O thou earth, at thy Lord's Resurrection.*

II. Fit it was, an Angel should first publish it, an heavenly Messenger, as being a matter supernatural and heavenly, and of special revelation. This Mystery of Faith,

Faith, 'tis not a point of humane discovery; but of Angelical revelation. All Proclamations are first published at the Court-gate; then sent abroad into the Kingdom. This new revelation, 'tis first proclaimed at Heaven gates by an Angel; and then sent abroad unto the Sons of Men.

The whole Gospel, 'tis not of man, no humane invention; not by man, not found out, or discovered by man: but by supernatural revelation. The conception of Christ, the tidings of it was brought by an Angel, *Luk. i. 16. The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to the Virgin Mary.* His Birth, the tidings of that was brought into the world by an holy Angel, *Luk. ii. 9, 10. The Angel of the Lord came upon them, I bring you tidings of great joy, to you is born a Saviour.* His Resurrection here, first published by an Angel. His Ascension into Heaven, that's attended upon, and celebrated by Angels, *Act. i. 10.* His second coming, that shall be published with a great shout from Heaven, by the voice of an Arch-angel, *1 Theß. iv. 16.* All these lively Pearls of our Faith were first delivered to the Church by the disposition of Angels. The Preface to *St. John's Revelation* agrees to all these supernatural Truths: *I Jesus have sent, and signified by my Angel, to shew to his servants what shall come to pass.* Take heed we despise not these sacred Truths, *Heb. ii. 1. We ought to give earnest heed to the things which we have heard; for the word spoken by Angels is stedfast; and every transgression, and disobedience shall receive a just recompence of reward, verse 2.*

III. Angels are made Messengers and Publishers of these tidings; and they gladly undertake it. See now there is a sweet communion, and intercourse 'twixt them and us. It shews us the virtue and power of that great atonement of Christ's Death and Blood-shed; it hath made up the breach and alienation 'twixt us and the Angels. Our breaking with God by sin, and the loss of his love, lost us the communion and love of the Angels. They were all partakers in God's quarrel; and therefore the Scripture presents them in Martial, and Military, and Warlike appearances, tells us of Armies and Hosts of Angels. *The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels, Ministers of vengeance.* Now Christ hath appeased all, reduced all into amity. Before, they appeared as Heralds of Arms in a military manner; now we enjoy a friendly intercourse, *Ephes. ii. 6. Christ, by his death hath slain hatred, he hath reconciled all things in Heaven, and the things in earth, Col. i. 2.* that is, saith *Chrysostome*, He hath made men and Angels become friends again. Now, we are no more foreigners or strangers, but fellow-citizens with the Angels.

If *Abfolom* regains his Fathers favour, then *Joab* befriends him; but if he rebels against his Father, then *Joab* stabs him. Such dealing we may expect from the holy Angels. See this amity begun at Christ's birth, *Luke ii.* Then the Angels began to lay aside all hostility. *There were with the Angels a multitude of heavenly Souldiers, verse 13.* And what was their Message? *Glory to God, and peace on earth, and good-will to men.* When Souldiers and Martial men proclaim peace, and good will, there is peace indeed. This office of Love the Angel performs, 'tis the fruit of Christ's Mediation, the merit of his Death, the Purchase of his Passion.

That's the first thing considerable in this Message, *A quo*, From whom it was sent, *ab Angelo.*

Secondly, A second thing considerable is, *Per quos*, By whom the Angel conveys this Message; they are the Women that repaired to the Sepulchre. Reason would conceit, that some other Messengers should have been employed, than these poor weak Women. But *God's thoughts are not as Man's thoughts are.*

1. God purposely makes choice of such Instruments in this great and weighty Service. In the whole carriage and Oeconomy of the Gospel, God observes a mixture of much spiritual power and glory, with much outward baseness and meanness. The Gospel, 'tis called *a rich treasure in an earthen Vessel, 2 Cor. iv. 7.* The Mystery conveyed is rich and precious; but the means of conveyance is poor, and contemptible. The whole Mystery of Christ is made up of power and weakness. His Conception was by the Holy Ghost, miraculously of a pure Virgin; but the outside mean, his Mother but an earthen Vessel, the spouse of a poor Carpenter. His Birth made known and published by an Angel; there is the heavenly treasure: but discover'd not to the great ones of the world,

Serm. V. but to poor Shepherds. His Lodging pointed out by a glorious Star; and yet his Cradle but a Cratch, his Nursery but a Stable. Being in the Wilderness, he was attended by Angels: but see the poor outside, he was amongst the wild Beasts, *Mark i. 13.* In his agony, he was full of trembling and horror; but then he was comforted from Heaven by an Angel. At his Death, he was crucified with Thieves; but yet the powers of heaven and earth trembled at it. The Tidings of his Resurrection first published by an Angel; but yet sent into the world by poor weak Women. Still you see a strange mixture of weakness and power. As it was with *Herod*, an Angel smote him, and yet Worms consumed him. A Carnal eye saw nothing in Christ, but weakness and infirmity; but a Spiritual eye in all these passages beheld his glory, as the glory of the only Son of God. The Gospel is so carried by God, that Infidelity finds occasion to stumble, and Faith a sure foundation to stand.

II. The Tidings of his Resurrection are conveyed into the world by weak Women. Had Flesh and Blood the ordering of it, it should have been first published to the Colledge of the Apostles: Or, if the Papists might have ruled it, *Peter* should have had the first intelligence, and vision of Angels directed to him. No, we see God inverts this order. In matters of Free Grace, and Supernatural Revelation, poor silly Women are preferred before the chief Apostles. What *Deborah* said to *Barak*, may be said to *Peter* and his fellow-Apostles, *This day shall not be for thine honour, God will do it by the hands of a Woman.* Poor *Aquila* and *Priscilla* may in this case instruct *Apollos*. The Lord can chuse poor and weak things, and make them outstrip the most excellent and chiefest. "Kings and Princes, saith *Chrysostom*, make known their minds to inferior People, by their great Officers and Ministers of State: God he employs poor, feeble, contemptible men, to declare his will to the Potentates of the World."

III. But yet there is some congruity that God observes in the choice of these Messengers. Something there was, why first he imparts this Truth to the Women; then by them to the Apostles. Why so? These good Women, they stood to it, and clave to Christ, when the Apostles all of them fled and forsook him; they assisted his Cross, when the other hid themselves, *Mark xv. 40.* They watched his Burial, repaired early and weeping to the Sepulchre; they were forwardest in attending his Passion, and so they are first made acquainted with his Resurrection. See *Peter* and the rest flee like fearful women; but these holy Matrons forsake him not: therefore they are made Apostles to them, *Go, tell his Disciples, and Peter, that he is risen.* 'Tis a check to them, that they should be thus out-stript by these poor Women. The News must come to them at the second hand. *Peter*, like *Jonas*, lies asleep under the Hatches, and must be awaked by these Women. They suffer weak ones to out-strip them in their services, and so come after them in their rewards and comforts.

The second thing considerable, are the Persons to whom these tidings are directed, *Tell his Disciples, and Peter.*

First, Here is a general direction to his Disciples.

Secondly, A special Charge to acquaint *Peter* with it by Name.

First, To his Disciples. But then we may ask *St. Judas's* Question *John xiv. 22.* *Why wilt thou manifest thy self to us, and not to the World?*

I. Why is not the Message directed to *Pilate* and *Herod*, to *Anas* and *Caiphas*, and the Priests that condemned him, and compassed his death? It might have been a mighty conviction to them. No, 'tis purposely hid from them, to punish their Infidelity, and former obstinacy. They sinned against knowledge, gainst his Miracles, blasphemed his Doctrine, destroyed and crucified him; now they are given over to the hardness of their hearts. They had heard him preach in his life-time; now, should he appear from the dead, they would not believe him.

II. Why not to the common People, that sinned out of ignorance? No, this manifestation of his Resurrection was not made promiscuously to all, purposely to prepare a way to Faith and Believing. The great honour that Christianity doth to God, is to embrace his Truth upon belief. Christians are not called *rationales*, but *fideles*, saith *Augustine*. Faith, 'tis the homage of our understanding; it doth incline

capite adorare Deum. And the great Mystery that Faith fixes upon, 'tis Christ's Resurrection. St. Paul makes it the Sum of our Christian Faith. *If thou shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised Christ from the dead, thou shalt be saved,* Rom. x. 9. Believe his Passion, yet if thou believe not his Resurrection, *thy Faith is in vain, thou art yet in thy sins,* 1 Cor. xv. 17. St. Peter tells us of God's purpose in his dispensations, *Act. x. 40. Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the People, but to Witnesses chosen before God, even to us—and commanded us to preach unto the People: that so the blessing that Christ pronounces, may rest upon the Church, Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. Aliud est videndo credere; that was Thomas his Faith, he must see Christ risen, ere he would believe it: aliud credendo videre, that's the right Faith, first to believe it, then to see it.*

So then, this Message and Tidings of Christ's Resurrection is directed to his Disciples; and we may consider them in a threefold Notion.

1. It is sent to his Disciples, and they were *Ecclesia representativa*, they were the only visible body of Christians: to teach us, to whom the benefit of Christ's Resurrection belongeth, 'tis to the Church, 'tis limited, and confined only to Believers. The Church, 'tis the price of his Blood, the inheritour of his Merits, the only partaker of his Resurrection. The Passion and Resurrection of his Natural body was all, and only for his Mystical body. *For them he laid down his life, and for them he took it up again.* Be sure thou beest one of that holy Fraternity; sort thy self amongst his Disciples, or his Resurrection doth not belong to thee.

2. These Tidings are sent *Discipulis dubitantibus, & incredulis*. The Faith of the Disciples was now in a great weakness, they had almost given over all belief, that Jesus was the Messiah, *Luk. xxiv. 21. We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.* Now they were giving over that thought, their Faith lies languishing. Yet for all this great pang and fit of Infidelity, they are accounted Disciples; they are Christ's, for all this their weakness of Faith. Our Faith, not only when 'tis in Robore, in its full strength and vivacity; but when 'tis in vulnere, wounded, and weakened, and overwhelmed with temptations, is accepted of him. When Faith is so feeble, it cannot apprehend and lay hold on him; yet then he will graciously comprehend and lay hold on us. See now, their Faith is so weak, it cannot look out for it self, God sends helps and succours, to support and revive it. Christ's death, it brought a Winter upon their Faith, it is blasted and shaken; but Christ's Resurrection, like the Spring-tide, sends up the sap of Faith into their hearts again, revives it, and makes it flourish again.

3. These Tidings are sent *Discipulis mæstis, & lugentibus*: These Disciples were at this time full of sadness and sorrow, for the loss of their Master. The sorrows for his Death and Passion, did afflict and oppress them; see how speedily messages of Joy and Comfort are dispatcht unto them. Such Mourners are blessed Mourners, *They shall be comforted.* They that can lament for his Passion, they shall be partakers of the joy and comfort of his Resurrection. Hast thou lost the presence and spiritual comfort of thy Saviour? Is he become to thee as one dead and gone? Mourn, and sorrow for this loss, and be sure thou shalt hear of him again with tidings of joy. *For a little time have I hid my self from thee, but with everlasting compassion will I embrace thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer, Isai. liv. 7. Dolores pœnitentis sunt dolores parturientis, saith St. Augustine.* The sorrows of a penitent soul, mourning for the loss of Christ, they are like the pains of a Woman in travel, they shall end in joy.

We come to the second Direction: a special charge is given them,

Secondly, To acquaint Peter with these good Tidings; an express Message is directed to him. Peter, it seems, had some special concernment in this great work of Christ's Resurrection. As the Title of the eighteenth Psalm, *The LORD delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.* Saul was more than an ordinary enemy, and so that deliverance was an extraordinary Work.

But then the enquiry must be, Why Peter must have a more personal information of Christ's Resurrection, than the other Disciples? Sure, they had all a like common Interest in Christ's Resurrection. Saint Peter assures us, that Christians

Serm. V. have all alike, *ισόμην πίσιν*, precious Faith with him, 2 Pet. i. 2. St. Jude calls it a common salvation, Ver. 3. We have all a Fellowship in this Gospel, Phil. i. 5. Why is this Message sent to Peter by name?

The *Papists* would fain pick out St. Peter's Prerogative, and Supremacy out of this special and personal Address. Many such arguments they have. Christ preached out of Peter's Ship: in that Ship he wrought the miraculous draught of Fishes: he paid Tribute for himself and Peter: these they boast of, as great significations of Peter's Supremacy: So this packet of News must be sure to be delivered to Peter's hands, he is made of the *Quorum*; nothing must be done or said, if Peter be not there. Nay, 'tis strange, though the Scripture say, He appeared first to Mary Magdalen, yet they are so bold as to say, He appeared first unto Peter. But sure St. Peter was now in no condition to dream of Supremacy, nor to challenge any other Primacy to himself, than that, which St. Paul elsewhere, not in pride, but in great humility, assumes to himself, that he was *primus peccatorum*, the chief of sinners. And accordingly let us resolve the purpose of this personal Message to Peter into these intendments.

I. This Message concerning our Saviour's Resurrection is sent to Peter, *Petro turpissimè lapsò*. Peter had fallen most foully; denied, forsworn his Master with curses and execrations. O, 'twas a great sin, of the first magnitude; and yet to such, and so vile a sinner are these Tidings directed. It shows the virtue of the Gospel of Christ's Death and Resurrection; The greatest sinners, the most heinous offenders may get good by it. 'Tis the glory of Christ, and of his plentiful redemption, that it can purchase pardon for the most notorious sinners. O be mercifull to my sin, for it is great, saith David, Psal. xxv. 11. Though it be great, nay, because it is great, thy mercy will be the more magnified in the pardoning of it. As a Sovereign Medicine is not only good for lesser ails, and ordinary diseases; but is able to cure the most dangerous Sickness. And Christ's Resurrection, it hath a special virtue to work that great work. St. Peter acknowledges that this was it recovered him; Blessed be God, that hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. i. 3. Christ's Resurrection raised Peter from his hopeles condition. And St. Paul ascribes this great work of saving of sinners to Christ's Resurrection, Ephes. i. 2. Thou hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; even when we were dead in sins, hath he quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together with Christ. He tells us, Chap. i. 19. God shews the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, Ver. 20. As Kings at their Coronation pardon the greatest offenders; so, on this day of Christ's exaltation, he dispatches a pardon to Peter here, though guilty of so great a sin.

II. This Message is sent to Peter, *Petro gravissimè vulnerato*. Peter's Faith and Graces have received a very great bruise and maim, by his fall, his Conscience is deeply wounded. He is like one fallen from an high place, exceedingly bruised, and lies for dead. Such an one must be caught up in our arms, more carefully tended.

Sinners, the more dangerous their condition is, the more they stand in need of speediest helps. Personal application of the means of recovery must be used to such. As a sick, weak body must be more carefully looked to; not only have meat set before him, and bid him feed, but we must feed him our selves, put it into his mouth. As Paul recovered Eutychus, when he lay for dead, Acts xx. 10. he went to him, he fell on him, and embraced him, and so fetcht life into him.

III. This Message is sent to Peter, *Petro acerbissimè dolenti*. Peter is now overwhelmed with sorrow for his heinous sin, he wept bitterly, no doubt abhorred himself in dust and ashes: And to extraordinary mourners, God graciously directs extraordinary, and special, and more personal comforts. As extraordinary sinners must be personally dealt withal; general reproofs will not stir such: so deep Penitents must have personal and particular assurances of comfort sealed-up unto them.

See how Paul writes personally for the penitent Corinthian, that they should take special care of him, lest he were swallowed up of sorrow. The Conscience after some great

great guilt, is hardly perswaded or drawn to comfort by common means. Christ's personal look upon *Peter*, that brought him to repentance. The Angel's personal message to *Peter*, that's the way to bring him to comfort. And this is the benefit of personal Absolution in cases of distress; which they that neglect, neglect their comfort. Serm. V.

Had this Message run only in general Terms, *Go, tell his Disciples*, *Peter's* dejected heart might have disclaimed his interest in it: "Oh, 'tis sent to his Disciples, but I am not worthy to be a Disciple, I have forsaken him, and denied him, and abjured him. His soul will refuse these general comforts. Well, be of good comfort *Peter*, He calls thee by Name, to thee in particular is this comfort directed. *Petrus vocatur ex nomine, ne desperaret ex negatione*, Greg.

And see the main comfort is fetcht from Christ's Resurrection: that, thoroughly considered, effectually applyed, will revive and cheer up the most pensive Creature; it will put life and spirit into the most fainting heart. See how *St. Paul* cheers up *Timothy*, exhorts him not to faint in his Ministry; but to endure hardship for the Gospel of Christ: what's the Cordial with which he comforts him? *2 Tim. i. 8. Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to my Gospel*. What, a faint-hearted Souldier under a victorious, conquering, and triumphing Commander? And thus also he supports his own weakness, *2 Cor. xiii. 4. Though Christ was crucified through weakness, yet he lives by the power of God; for we also are weak with him, but we shall live with him by the power of God*. Meditate on Christ's Resurrection, and be not faithless, but faithful.

IV. This Message is sent unto *Peter*, *Petro summe scandaloso*. *Peter* by his great fall in denying of Christ, hath incurred a great and infamous scandal, given a great offence to the whole Church of God. This personal message to him, shall not only comfort his Conscience, but cure his credit too. It plainly signifies, he must not be cast off, but be dealt mercifully withal, and accounted as a Brother. Nay, it restores him not only to his Discipleship, but to his office of an Apostle. The Tidings are sent to him under the name of *Peter*, his Apostolical Name.

Call me not Naomi, but Marah, said that sorrowful Woman, *Ruth i. 20*. So would many a censorious one say, "Call him not *Peter*, a Rock, a chief Pillar of the Church; he hath been as *Reuben*, unstable as Water, he hath lost his excellency. No, God is able to make him stand. If God owns him for a Child, we must own him for a Brother. Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him; nay, comfort him as a Brother. The Messenger that brings them these Tidings, will teach them this Duty. 'Tis *Mary Magdalen*, to whom he first appeared, out of whom he had cast out seven Devils, Verse 9. The casting out of seven Devils in her, gives good hope of pardoning three denyals in *Peter*. 'Twas a proud Hypocritical spirit in the elder Brother, that would not own the returning Prodigal. See how he justles him off, thrusts him away; *This thy Son* (said he to his Father) *that hath lived riotously*: but what saith his Father? *This thy Brother was dead and is alive*: "If I be thy Father, thou must acknowledge him to be thy Brother.

And so from this personal Message to *Peter*, we may briefly collect these three Corollaries.

1. Here is *Indulgentia Christi*; the tender care that Christ takes of weak Christians. As loving Parents are most tender of their weakest Children; so is Christ to the feeble Christian, sorrowful, heavy-hearted Christians; his bowels of compassion yearn most towards them. The good Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine Sheep, to seek and recover the stray, lost Sheep. *Mater, quem ægrotantem novit, filium magis fovet, sapius complectitur*, Bern. The tender Mother lays the sick Child in her lap, cherishes it in her bosom.

2. Here is *Sollicitudo Angeli*: the Angel pities *Peter*, and hath care and compassion on him. *Peter's* Tears were the Wine of Angels, they were a Banquet in Heaven; there was joy in Heaven among the Angels for his repentance. See now the Angel requites him, and speeds Messages of joy and comfort to him, reaches out unto him the cup of Consolation. Oh, 'tis the work of an Angel to comfort the afflicted. Could we speak with the *Tongues of Angels*, if we want *this Charity* to poor sorrowful Christians, we were *nothing worth*, Messengers of no value

3. Here

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3. Here is *Officium Ministri*, in conformity to Christ, in imitation of his Angel, it must be our Duty to practise the charge given to these Messengers; have a care of *Peter*, of a sorrowful, contrite, broken-hearted Christian. See, the Angel is careful of him, and Christ is compassionate to him, and shall we neglect him? *Non vult Deus, ut parvi pendas, quos ipse minime parvi pendit.* Christ prizes such, and then we must not slight them. Nay, 'tis the noblest work of a Minister, his chiefest excellency, to raise up and comfort a broken-hearted Christian. What saith the Prophet *Isaiah*? Chap. l. 4. *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned* (what to doe? to dispute Controversies, tie, and untie, Knots in Divinity? No,) *that I might know how to speake a word in season to him that is weary.* 'Tis *St. Paul's* tryal of a spiritual man, *Gal. vi. 1.* *If any be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. Ye that are spiritual; I, that's a sign of a spiritual man, to comfort the comfortless.* *Nihil adeo spirituale virum demonstrat, ac alienae conscientiae tractatio.* Aug.

Now follows the

Third Particular of the Text, that's the Sum of the Message, the News to be imparted, *He goes before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him.*

Indeed, the scope and purpose of the Words is to assure them that Christ is risen again; and to establish them in that Truth, he tells them where, and how they shall know it. So then three things are observable.

First, An Intimation.

Secondly, A Prediction.

Thirdly, A Promise.

First, Here is an Intimation of Christ's Resurrection.

Secondly, A Prediction, *He goes before you into Galilee.*

Thirdly, A Promise, *There shall you see him.*

First, Here is an Intimation of Christ's Resurrection. The Angel is careful to confirm that Truth to them. Indeed, 'tis the main, capital Truth of Christian Religion, the Sum, and pith, and kernel of the Gospel. *St. Paul* makes this the main point of Christianity, that Christ should suffer, and be the first that should rise from the dead, *Acts xxvi. 23.* 'Twas the great employment and office of an Apostle, to be a witness of his Resurrection, *Acts i. 22.* This Truth, 'tis the fundamental Truth, it strengthens our Faith in other saving Truths.

I. It confirms us in the Truth of his Divinity. *He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4.* *Thou wilt not give thine holy One to see corruption, Psal. xvi. 10.*

II. It confirms to us the benefit of his Death and Passion. His Resurrection is that, which makes the merit of his Death effectual. Had he died only, death had overcome him; now he is risen, he hath overcome Death. Thus *David* in spirit speaking of Christ, *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the Dust praise thee? shall it declare thy Truth?* *Psal. xxx. 9.* No, but his Resurrection did; that performed to us the sure mercies of *David*, *Acts xiii. 34.*

III. This Intimation is the strongest means to revive and comfort them 'Twas matter of comfort for Christ to say, *She is not dead, but sleeps.* 'Twas a comfort to *Martha* to hear that word, *Thy Brother shall rise again.* But, *He is awakened from the sleep of death, he is already raised from the dead*, this speaks actual, present, full Comfort. Faith, 'tis like the Flower called *Heliotropium*, when the Sun sets, it fades and closes; when the Sun rises and returns, it blows out and flourishes. As *Jacob* could not be comforted all the time *Joseph* was supposed dead: but *Joseph* proves to be alive, and is highly advanced, that revives the spirit of *Jacob*, and puts life into him.

Secondly, Here is a Prediction, that must evidence the truth of his Resurrection, *He goes before you into Galilee.* And here are three things.

I. An Act of local Motion, *He goeth.*

II. A timely Prevention, *He goeth before you.*

III. The Designation of the Place, that's *Galilee.*

I. Here is an act of local Motion. Christ's Body now, after his Resurrection,

'tis

'tis a glorified Body, and yet within the compass and condition of a true natural Body, to be transferred by motion from one place to another. Christ's Body, though glorified, yet retained the condition of a true natural body. At his Resurrection, he laid aside the infirmities of his humane body; but retained all the properties, and exercised the actions and functions of a true body. *Serm. V.*

1. After his Resurrection, it was a finite body, *He is risen, he is not here.* When it was in one place, it was not in another.
2. It was a sensible body, *Feel, and handle me, saith Christ, a Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as I have, Luke xxiv. 39.*
3. It was organical; we read of his Hands, Feet, Side. It had all the parts and members of a humane body, in a just proportion and situation, the fit proportions of a humane body.

'Tis a useful Truth to be known, against that gross error of the corporal presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament. The Papists, that they may maintain that Christ is present in the Sacrament, not only spiritually, but corporally; not only to the soul of the Believer, but on the Altar, and under the appearances of Bread and Wine; not only received in Faith, but by the mouth of the body, and taken into the Stomach, as other meats; have turned this Mystery, not so much into a Miracle, as into a Monster. They teach, *That Christ may be at the same time in manifold places, sitting in Heaven, and yet lying on the Altar.* Nay further, they say,

1. That Christ's body is in the Sacrament, but yet in a most vile, debasing manner, hath no power naturally of himself to move himself.
2. That he hath no natural Faculties of sense, no natural ability to hear or see.
3. No natural power of understanding, to apprehend any thing present, or to remember any thing past.

Thus have they transformed Christ, the living God, into an Idol: having Eyes, and seeing not; Ears, and hearing not; Feet, and walking not; Heart, and understanding not. Such injury offer they to the glorious person of the Son of God.

II. Here is an act of Prevention, *He goes before you.* Early and speedily he hastens to Galilee, to visit and comfort them. 'Tis the gracious course of God's preventing goodness, he is forward to relieve and comfort his Church. All delays are tedious to him. Thus Solomon describes the speed Christ makes in visiting his Church, *Cant. ii. 17. My well-beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart, he comes leaping on the Mountains, skipping upon the Hills.* Early, betimes in the morning, he causes us to hear the voice of joy and gladness: Nay, see the impatience of his love to his poor Disciples, he appoints them Galilee, but he cannot withhold himself so long from them, he appears to them sooner.

1. To Mary in the Garden.
2. To the Women in the way, as they are going to Jerusalem.
3. To the two Disciples, as they are going to Emmaus.
4. To the Apostles, ere they stirred one foot out of the City.

This is the speediness of his mercy. *Isai. lxxv. 24. Before they call, will I answer; and, whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear.* He is still better than his promise.

III. Here is the designation of the Place, that's Galilee. Why to so remote a place?

(1.) *Ad exercitium Fidei.* As 'tis said of Peter's sinking, 'twas not *pedes*, but *fides*; not his Feet, but his Faith failed him: so Christ here requires them not to exercise their Feet, but their Faith. He would have them begin with Faith, and then they shall end in sight. Had they not had some beginnings of Faith, that he was risen, they would not have stirred one foot to have gone to see him. *Credendo, præparamur Deo, saith Augustine.* First believe, let that have its work, and then, in good time, thou shalt see that which thy Faith believeth.

(2.) He sends them so far, *ad accendendum desiderium*, the more to quicken and enflame their desires and longings to see him. When the Spouse in her Bed sought him, *whom her soul loved*, with some laziness, drowsie, sleepy wishes, she did not find him; but when she comes to be *sick of love*, panting and longing after him, then she enjoyed him. If he comes sooner to them, 'tis to comfort them; if he stays longer, 'tis to quicken and enliven their desires towards him. In

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In particular, *Galilee* is the Place appointed.

1. 'Twas *locus tutus*, he graciously provides for his Disciples safety; he calls them out of *Hierusalem*, the place of persecution, makes them withdraw themselves from that bloody generation, where they were beset with dangers; leads them into a place of safety, where, with greater freedom, they might converse with him. Thus God speaks to his People, *Isai. xxvi. 20. Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut the doors about thee, hide thy self, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.* Indeed, when they were endued with strength from above, then he bids them fill *Jerusalem* with their Preaching; now, in their fears, he mercifully-tenders them. Here's our comfort in all our dangers, he will either shelter our weakness, that we may avoid them; or endue us with strength, that we may undergo them.

2. 'Twas *locus familiaris*, a place where he had usually conversed with them; 'twas the place of his abode, he was called a *Galilean*. Purposely Christ chuses all the circumstances that might help forward their Faith. In *Galilee* they had often enjoyed his presence, his appearing there would more fully affect them. As God gave *Moses* a sign to confirm him, *This shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee, when thou hast brought forth the People out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this Mountain, Exod. iii. 12.* Thus Christ descends to all helps, suffers them to handle him, he eats and drinks with them, appears to them at the Sea-side, an usual place of resort, there they see him, and know him, 'Tis the Lord, said *John* to *Peter*. He was known to them by the breaking of Bread; an usual action of his, by which they discerned him.

3. 'Twas *locus Discipulorum plenus*; It was a place wherein Christ had most of his Disciples. His preaching had nothing the success at *Jerusalem*, that it had at *Galilee*. In *Galilee* he was seen of five hundred Brethren at once. Here is the place that Christ delights to visit and frequent, where he hath the fullest Churches, the greatest communion of Saints and Believers. This *David* foretells in that Psalm of Christ's Passion, *Psal. xxii. 22. I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Where two or three be gathered together, he will be present*; but multitudes of Disciples, they invite Christ to come amongst them. He walks among the seven golden Candlesticks, converses with his Churches. Thus the Spouse enquiring after Christ, *Cant. i. 7. Tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest*? He answers, *If thou know not, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock.* Wouldst thou know where Christ is? He is amongst his Disciples. He is most fully there where most Christians are.

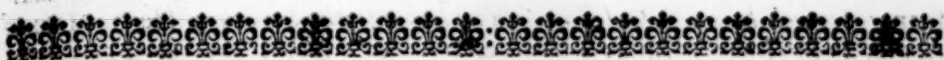
4. 'Tis *locus typicus*. Christ calls them from *Jewry* to *Galilee*; it casts the shadow of a Type and prefiguration; it represents to us the passage and remove of Christ and his Gospel, from the *Jews* to the *Gentiles*. 'Tis called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, *Matth. iv. 15. Hierusalem* hath forfeited God's Covenant; that City, and Temple, and Worship, must give place to *Galilee*, to the fulness of the *Gentiles*. Upon the Resurrection, the Gospel was preached to the *Gentiles*. Thus Christ singles out *Jonas* to be a lively Type of his Resurrection; *As Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the Whale; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the Grave, and then rise again.* Of all the Prophets, *Jonas* was the Prophet of the *Gentiles*, sent to *Niniveh*, the head City of the *Gentiles*. Amongst them was the Type of the Resurrection performed. Not only the calling of the *Jews*, but the conversion of the *Gentiles*, 'tis a rising from the dead. Christ preached this Doctrine to these *Greeks*, that came to see him, and they were *Gentiles*: *John xii. 24. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.* His Resurrection, 'tis the harvest of the *Gentiles*.

Before, in his life-time he confined his own presence and preaching to the Nation of the *Jews*, and forbade his Apostles to preach unto the *Gentiles*; but his Resurrection brake down the Wall of separation, now their commission is enlarged, *Go, teach all Nations.* Before, like *David*, he reigned only in *Hebron*; now, that he is risen again, he rules over all *Israel*. The fulness of the *Gentiles* are given unto him. Indeed Christ foretold it before, but yet more darkly, by a glance only,

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and intimation, in his Sermon at Nazareth; Luke iv. 25. *There were many Widows in Israel, in the days of Elijah; but he was sent to none of them, but to the Widow of Sarepta; she was a Gentile: and there were many Lepers in Israel, in the time of Elisha; but none were cleansed, but Naaman the Syrian.* This Doctrine then the Jews endured not; nay, the very Apostles themselves could not well brook it; but after the Resurrection, they then gladly confest it, Acts xi. 18. *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* And that's our condition, we were sinners of the Gentiles, we are made partakers of his Resurrection.

Serm. V.



A

SERMON

Preached on

ASCENSION-DAY.

St. JOHN XX. 17.

Go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.



THE Function and Office of our Saviour's Mediatourship was exercised and performed in a double State and Condition.

First, The first was a State of Debasement and Humiliation; *He humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation.* Phil. ii. 7. He descended to be a Man, nay a Worm, *Deus vermiculus.* A strange stooping and condescension.

Secondly, The second was a State of Advancement and Exaltation; *God highly exalted him,* Phil. ii. 9. lifted up his Head, placed his Throne above all Thrones, and Principalities,

made him higher than the heavens, most high in the glory of God the Father. They are two large dimensions.

First, The Depth of his Humiliation.

Secondly, The Height of his Glory.

His Humiliation is that which the Scripture first insists upon. And in it were three steps of Descent:

First, The first is his stooping unto Death, in laying down his Life.

Secondly, The second is his stooping into the Grave, his entering into that Hold of Death.

Thirdly, The Third is his stooping into the continuance and abode in it, his enduring the bands of death, and lying under the power of it.

Answerable unto which three steps of Debasement, were the three steps and degrees of his Advancement and Exaltation.

First, Opposite to the Humiliation of his Death, is the Glory and Advancement of his reviving and Resurrection.

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Secondly,

Serm. I.

Secondly, Opposite to his Discension into that Prison of Death, is his entring into the Region of Life: that's the Glory of his Ascension. And then,

Thirdly, Opposite to his Abode and continuance in that place of Misery, is his sitting at the right hand of his Father in highest glory. Our Faith having made a publick profession and acknowledgement of his first degree of Advancement in the glory of his Resurrection; we must proceed further, and adore him in the second degree of his magnificent Glory, in believing and honouring his glorious Ascension.

Let us remember the Doctrine, and perform the Duty, which Piety owes to to this Day. A Mystery and blessed truth it is, more fully revealed to us Christians. *'Tis well known, O God, how thou wentest into thy Sanctuary.* He was seen of Angels and of Men, when he was received up into glory. But yet it had many prefigurations and imitations of it, even in the Old Testament. That afforded three remarkable Types of it: that contains three clear Prophecies of it.

I. *Enoch*, he was translated by God out of this World, and really, and bodily taken up into Paradise. His wonderful Translation was a lively prefiguration of Christ's glorious Ascension.

II. *Elias* his Rapture, he was mounted upon those Chariots of Salvation, and bodily carried up to the place of Glory. Both these were *Anti-ambulators Christi*; Ushers and forerunners of his Ascension. And,

III. The High-Priest, by God's Appointment, was to enter through the Veil of the Temple into the Holy of Holies, there to appear before the Mercy-Seat: thereby typifying our great High-Priest, who passed through the Heavens, and appeared before the Throne of Grace and Glory, and made intercession for us, and from thence sent down his Holy Spirit upon us.

And as these three Types prefigured it, so the Fathers insist upon three Prophecies that foretold it.

1. *Psalms xxiv. 7.* There *David* in Spirit foresees his glory, foretells his Ascension, *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.* As a King, when he enters into his Royal City, they set open their Gates, pluck up their Portcullis, and make way for his entrance. Then again,

2. *Psalms lxviii. 18.* *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led Captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men.* This Song and Psalm of Triumph King *David* penned when he saw his Glory, and spake of him. And then,

3. *Isaiah lxiii. 1.* There the Angels are represented wondering and magnifying his glorious Ascension. *Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save?* All those heavenly Hosts attended his Triumph; they cast not down Boughs from the trees, as at his entry into *Jerusalem*; but Crowns from their heads, when he entred into his Glory.

The Text then, 'tis a Declaration of the great Mystery of Christ's glorious Ascension. And 'tis made known, not by the Ministry of Man or Angel; but by the sacred Oracle of Christ's own voice, an immediate revelation of it from Christ to *Mary Magdalen*, to be conveyed by her to the Church of God. And in it we may observe these two Particulars:

First, Is the Publication of it.

Secondly, Is the thing it self, that is made known and published.

First, The Publication of it gives forth it self in three Particulars:

First, Here is an Injunction of the Duty, *But go.*

Secondly, Here is a direction, to whom she is sent, *Go to my Brethren.*

Thirdly, Here is a Prescription of the Form of Words in which she must publish it, *Say unto them, I ascend.*

First, Here is an Injunction of a Duty, *But go.* *Mary Magdalen* was now fallen at Christ's feet, and embraced them: so *St. Matthew* tells us, *Chap. xxviii. 9.* the usual place for her humble and affectionate Devotion. She hangs about our Saviour. Now she hath found him whom her Soul loved: but Christ forbids any further embracing;

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Touch me not, but go to my Brethren. This embracing of his feet came *ex humano affectu*, out of a well-meant, but yet humane affection. She thought it the best evidence of her love and joy, to kiss those feet which once she had washed and and bathed with her Tears, and now lately had seen bathed in his own blood. Christ rejects this testimony of her love, and directs her to another more acceptable service. "Leave touching my natural body, and go comfort my mystical body; *Go to my Brethren*, carry these Tidings to them. Serm. I

Our love to Christ is best shewn, not in our humane, passionate Affections to his bodily presence; but in performance of those Religious services which he requires of us. It fares now with *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom Christ had cast out seven Devils, as it did with that *Dæmoniack* out of whom Christ had cast out a whole Legion of Devils, *Mark v.* He much longed after Christ's bodily presence: he prayed him, that he might be with him; but Christ suffered him not, but bad him go and publish how great things the Lord had done for him. Christ is now more advanced into a more spiritual condition, and so accepts not the offices of humane conversation; but expects at our hands the duties and services of spiritual Devotion.

Secondly, Here is a Direction, to whom she is sent, *Go to my Brethren.* Whom means he by that? Sure, their conjecture is improbable, that by *Brethren*, understand his Kinsmen according to the flesh. No doubt, Christ sends her to those to whom the Angel sent her. And what said he? *Go tell his Disciples*, those whom himself immediatly after visits and comforts. 'Tis that spiritual fraternity of Believers and Apostles; alluding to that of the Psalmist, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren.* He had transferred that name of *Brethren* from his fleshly Kinsmen to his Apostles and Disciples: *They, that do the will of my Father*, they are his Brethren, *Mat. xii. 50.* To such he sends her.

And purposely, he uses this gracious compellation of *Brethren*.

I. He owns them as Brethren, *ob consanguinitatem Naturæ.* Having taken our Nature upon him, he acknowledges and accepts us to be his Brethren: He became *flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone*: He naturalized himself to us by his Incarnation;

1. To gain more interest in us; that by the Law of propinquity of Blood, he might have right to redeem us.

2. Thereby to breed more tenderness of bowels and compassion to us. *Homo sum, humanum nihil à me alienum puto.* Hence St. Paul tells us, *He was partaker of flesh and blood*, *Heb. ii. 14.* and *Verse 11.* *Both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren.*

II. But yet somewhat more was in it. For never till now, in the whole course of the Gospel do we find, that he vouchsafed them this favour, to call them *Brethren*. Sometimes he calls them Servants. He tells them it was his wont so to call them, *Joh. xiii. 14. 15.* *I am your Master.* Otherwhile he calls them *Friends*, *John xv. 15.* *I have called you friends.* And again, *Luke xii. 4.* *I say unto you, my friends.* Elsewhere he calls them *Children*, *Mark x. 24.* Indeed sometimes he terms them *Brethren* amongst themselves, *Mat. xxiii. 8.* *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren*; but never till now, he calls them his *Brethren*. Therefore to testify the truth of his Resurrection; that as by his Incarnation he was our Brother, by assuming our Nature to himself; so by his Resurrection he continues still our Brother, by resuming and raising again the same Flesh and Body.

'Tis a Rule in Logick, *Cessante fundamento, cessat relatio.* If he had not rose again in our Humane Nature, but had taken to him some other body, this blessed relation of Brotherhood had ceased also. This community of Nature in his Resurrection makes him still to call them *Brethren*: Which makes him nearer to us, than to the Angels; they are Servants to him, no Brothers; they are Fellow-servants with us, but not our Brethren. They say at his Resurrection, *Go, tell his Disciples*, *Mark xvi. 7.* They speak as Strangers or Friends, not as Kinsmen or Brethren.

There is a supernatural Birth, and so a spiritual Kindred, by the Resurrection; *This day have I begotten thee*: St. Paul applies it to the Resurrection, *Acts xiii. 33.*

Serm. I. And answerably, Christians are called *The Children of the Resurrection*, Luke xx. 36. 'Tis the main Prop of our Faith, that Christ raised the same body which was born of the Virgin, by which he is flesh of our flesh, and in it sits at the right hand of God. It was a wicked error of some Hereticks, that Christ carried not his Humane body up to Heaven, but laid it off, and left it in the Body of the Sun; misreading and mis-applying that place in the Psalm, *Posuit Tabernaculum in Sole*: of which they made this fond construction, That Christ ascended in body as far as the Sun in the Firmament, and then made that his *Spoliarium*, there he cast off his Flesh, and in Spirit only ascended up to Heaven. No, 'tis both our confession and our comfort, that, as in his Incarnation he cloathed himself with our flesh, so he resumed it again at his Resurrection, and carried it with him into Heaven at his Ascension. *Quod semel assumpsit, nunquam deposuit.* Believe all other Articles; yet, if we deny this, *our Faith is in vain, we are yet in our sins.*

III. He calls them *Brethren*, purposely by this gracious Compellation to convey comfort unto them. The poor Disciples, no question, were greatly dejected and confounded in themselves; they had all forsaken him, and fled from him; *Peter* had denyed him, and forsworn him: With what faces could they look on him? what exprobrations might they justly expect from him? See, to relieve and revive them, he sends them no harsh, upbraiding Message; but speaks comfortably and lovingly to them, in terms of tenderness and dearest affection. Thus *Joseph*-like, he comforts them, *I am your Brother Joseph*: They told him, these forsook Christ; yet still, *I am your Brother*; and asks them not, as *Joseph* did them, *Doth my Father live*? but assures them, that his Father lives, and that he is a Father to them also. Nay, he exceeds *Joseph* in compassion: *Joseph* acted a part of strangeness and severity for a time: Christ, his first message to them is love. Thus, like the good Father in the Gospel, he receives his returning Prodigal, neither checks him, nor expostulates with him, but runs, and meets him, and kisses him, with all loving affection. How loving will he be to those that never forsake him, that is thus sweet, and gracious to them that fled from him, and durst not own him?

IV. He calls them *Brethren* after his Resurrection, now in the state of Exaltation, ascending into his Glory. In his highest Exaltation, behold and admire his gracious Condescension; he hath laid aside the state of Humiliation, but not the Virtue and Grace of Humility. 'Tis true, that he might become our brother, he was fain to be humbled; but now he is exalted, he still owns us for Brethren. As *Joseph* in his highest honour, owns poor Shepherds and Herd-men, for his Kindred and Brethren.

Humility doth not only go before Honour, as *Solomon* saith; but it dwells with Honour, and doth ever accompany it. The Apostle saith it of our Saviour, *Heb. ii. 11. He is not ashamed to call us Brethren.* He might well enough despise us, and disclaim us in our base condition, but he doth not. 'Twas a Rule for the Kings of *Israel* (whose Kingdom was a special prefiguration of the Kingdom of Christ) that they should not lift up their hearts above their Brethren. And 'tis the grand Motive to lowliness of mind, that *Paul* uses, *Phil. ii. 5. Let the same mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus. Learn of me*, saith Christ, *for I am lowly*, *Matth. xi. 28.* Nay, we had rather learn of those that are lofty, and despise others of a lower condition.

'Tis reported of *CHARLES the Great*, that an *Heathen King* coming to the Court, with an intendment to turn Christian, and seeing many poor people lying without on the ground, and enquiring who they were, when he heard they were Christians, he changed his mind, and resolved not to be of that Religion, where the Worshipers of that God were so much neglected. No, let the best of us Brother those, whom Christ calls Brethren. *Have not the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, in respect of Persons*, *James ii. 1.* In the Primitive Times, when this example of Christ was fresh in their Eyes, how readily did the chiefest Christians condescend to these terms of love? *Peter*, a chief Apostle, ranks himself with his inferiours in the Church, *I am also an Elder*, *1 Pet. v. 1.* *Paul* calls himself a fellow-servant: *John*, *Your Brother in the Kingdom of Christ*, *Rev. i. 9.* No eminency of Grace, no dignity of Place, no degree of Authority must make us forget this, to own
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and acknowledge even the lowest Christians, as our beloved Brethren. The proud rich man, *Luke xvi.* can be content to claim kindred of *Abraham*, he calls him *Father Abraham*; but ye read not that ever he said *Brother Lazarus*; and ye know what became of him. It will not serve us, nor save us, to be able to say, *Abraham is our Father*; except we will charitably acknowledge the poorest Christian, even *Lazarus* for our Brother.

V. Christ being now to ascend into Heaven, he owns them for his Brethren; 'tis a relation of an eternal continuance. Being to leave them, he doth not now disclaim that reference: but gives them assurance by this compellation, that he will acknowledge it in Heaven: *Matth. xx. 40. The least of these my Brethren.* Other humane Relations are but local and temporal, they serve for this life, and this world only; but when death and departure comes, they cease and determine. As Christ at his death, he calls the Virgin *Mary* not Mother, but Woman; *Woman, behold thy Son*, *John xix. 26.* estranging himself from that which was humane and carnal in that Relation. I, but this spiritual Relation 'twixt Christ and us, it will hold in Heaven.

There is no marrying, nor giving in marriage, no other civil Relations or Societies in Heaven; only this bond of spiritual Brother-hood with Christ, it will last for ever. Children of God, and Children of the Resurrection, continue there, *Luke xx. 36.* This holy Relation is the denomination and bond of the whole Church, not only here, but in Heaven also: *Ephes. iii. 14, 15. For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family of Heaven and Earth is named.* All of us are joyned in one holy communion with God, and Brother-hood with Christ. That Relation is eternal, which is grounded upon that communion and fellowship which is eternal. The Jews have a saying, "That when a Pagan, or Idolater loses his Father, he hath good cause to mourn; because he hath nothing left him, but a Stock, or Stone to be his Father. But a right Believer, though his earthly Father dies, he hath cause to be comforted, for he hath a Father in Heaven. Though Abraham know us not, and Israel be ignorant of us; yet doubtless thou art our Father: this Name is for everlasting, *Isai. lxiii. 16.* Gain this holy and happy Relation, that Christ is thy Brother, it will last thee in Heaven.

VI. Christ being to leave them, and to ascend into Heaven, he calls them *Brethren*; thereby to combine them in this peaceable bond, and endearing Association. He desires to leave them as Brethren, in an holy union. Purposely he links them into this Society; if they will own him, they must own each other. Disclaim Christ for your Brother, or else Brother every Christian. It was his last bequeathment, Love, and Peace: *My Peace I leave with you*, *John xiv. 27.* As *Joseph* parting with his Brethren, he lays this charge upon them, *Fall not out by the way*, *Gen. xlv. 24.*

Indeed the name of Brethren, 'tis the choice Style of the Gospel, *Mat. xxiii. 8. All ye are Brethren.* 'Tis the improvement of Charity under the New Testament. Under the Law, we meet it more rarely: *Proximus*, thy Neighbour, that's the more usual Relation there, *Love thy Neighbour.* But the Gospel offers more Grace, *Love as Brethren*, *1 Pet. iii. 8.* 'Twas the main Title by which the Disciples were named, before they were called *Christians*, *Believers*, and *Brethren*. And so *St. Peter* calls the community of Christians, an *holy Priesthood*, *1 Pet. iii. 17. Love the Brother-hood.* This Brotherly Love, 'tis the Evidence of our Election, the Seal of our Adoption, the Badge of our Profession, the Pledge of our Salvation. How should we tender and maintain this sacred Association, of which Christ is the Founder and first of that Order? *He is the first born amongst many Brethren*, *Rom. viii. 29.* Here he puts upon us this bond of Peace, when he goes from us; and *St. Peter* exhorts us, that when he returns again to us at the last day, we be diligent, that we be found of him in peace, *2 Pet. iii. 14. Receive one another, as Christ received us to the Glory of God*, *Rom. xv. 7.*

We come to the next Particular; That's,

Thirdly, The Prescription of the form of Words in which the must make this Publication, *Say unto them, I ascend.* And this form and manner of Publication, 'tis observable upon two Reasons.

Serm. I.

I. 'Tis *Ascendo*, not *Ascendit*. It comes as a personal Speech, directed from himself, and in his own Name: not a matter of Collection or Observation; but of report and personal relation. They are *verba recitativa* (as they use to call the Sacramental Forms.) She must not say, *He doth ascend*; but, Say, in my Name, *I do ascend*; For three Reasons.

1. *Ob majorem auctoritatem*. His immediate words reported and pronounced to them, as from his own mouth, will bear the most Sway and Authority. 'Tis the commanding stile of Sacred Truth, *I the Lord speak it*. 'Tis his Name that gives power to it. *Hæc dicit Dominus*, 'tis the Seal of Truth. Ezek. iii. 17. *Thou shalt bear the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me*. That word is most prevalent, that hath most from God, and least from man. *I have delivered unto you what I have received*, saith St. Paul: *Quod recepimus; non Quod excogitavimus*: 'tis a Tradition from God, not Invention of Man. His Ministers are but *Internuncii*, Reporters and Relaters. All Writs issue out in the King's Name. It made *Eglon*, though an *Heathen King*, rise up with reverence, when *Ehud* said, *I have a message from God unto thee*, Judg. iii. 20.

2. 'Tis thus directed in this Form of words, *I ascend, ob majorem consolationem*; 'tis more comfort to have a word from his own mouth, than from any other man's intimation. 'Twas a token of strangeness in *Joseph*, to speak to his Brethren by an Interpreter; and it was great comfort to them, when he said, *I am your Brother Joseph; your eyes see, and the eyes of my Brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaks unto you*, Gen. xlv. 12. His word indeed, it speaks comfort; *non sonans, sed penetrans*; *non loquax, sed efficax*; *non obstrepens auribus, sed affectibus blandiens*, Bern. A Message from his own mouth, 'tis as fruit from the *Tree of Life*, it presently revives them.

3. *Ob majorem fiduciam*. It would never have prevailed with their Faith, to have had it from any other hand, than from Christ himself. None but Christ can dictate and warrant this profession to our Faith, *My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God*. Who durst draw out such a form of belief, but Christ himself? The Messengers of *Benhadad* durst not claim Brotherhood of a conquering King of *Israel*, till *Ahab* himself was pleased to say, *My Brother Benhadad*; much less could Faith have presumed to use this high stile and profession, had not Christ himself here prescribed it to us. God must first say, *Seek thou my face*; before we can say, *Thy face, LORD, will I seek*. If all the Angels in Heaven should tell us, that Christ is our Brother, God is our Father; Faith could not embrace it: It must be a word from Christ, that must give us that assurance. Thus the Minister, in Christ's Name, saying, *I baptize thee, I absolve thee, I pronounce thee justified and pardoned*, doth more than all the Angels in Heaven can do, they cannot say it. That's the first, *Ascendo*, not *Ascendit*.

II. This Form prescribed, is observable upon another Reason; 'tis *Ascendo*, not *Ascensus sum*. He saith, *I do ascend*, now in the present Time. He saith not, *I shall hereafter ascend*. And yet Christ was not now in the act of ascending, 'twas forty days after. So long he conversed and abode amongst them; and yet we see here he expresses himself in a form of the present time, *I now ascend*.

1. This form of speaking shews the Certainty of his Ascension; he was as sure to ascend to Heaven, as if he were now mounting upon the wings of the wind. 'Tis the stile of Truth and Infallibility, to speak of things to come, as of past or present, because they shall be certainly accomplished in their due season. *Fecit quæ futura sunt*, as some read it and apply it. This certainty of Divine Predictions makes the Prophets use those anticipations of time in their Prophecies. *To us a Son is born*, and the like: speaking rather like Evangelists than Prophets; telling an History, rather than foretelling a Prophecy: especially in all their predictions of Christ. This Certainty makes him call those things that are not, as if they were.

2. *I do ascend*, expressed in the present Time; because now all his thoughts and meditations were upon his Ascension, uses no more humane, earthly conversation, but, after his Resurrection, he is entering upon another step and degree, his glorious Ascension. Christ's Immortality sorts not with this valley of Death; but in heart,

heart, and thought, and preparation, he is mounting up to Heaven. *Why seek you the living among the dead?* said the Angel at his resurrection; nor must we expect the immortal and glorified Son of God amongst mortal and miserable men.

3. His Ascension is expressed in the present Time, to quicken and stir up the slowness of their Faith. They are doubting and distrusting the Truth of his Resurrection, and yet Christ is now finishing and propounding a new Article of Faith to their Belief, the Article of his Ascension. What? shall they still doubt of his Resurrection? Here is a new Lesson to be learned, the Doctrine and Mystery of his Glorious Ascension. O, this backwardness of their Belief, it held Christ out of heaven: He is fain to foreflow his glory, to set back his Ascension, to recover their Faith. *He must be believed on in the World, and then received up into Glory,* 1. Tim. iii. 16.

We have done with the Publication: Now follows,

Secondly, The thing it self, to be published, that is, his Ascension. And in it are two things considerable.

First, Is *Motus*, the Motion, *I Ascend*.

Secondly, Is *Terminus motus*, that to which he doth ascend. And in it two things,

I. Is the Specification of the Term, that's *To the LORD*.

II. Is the Amplification and Description of him, by a twofold Relation.

1. The Relation of a *Father*.

2. Of *God*. And each of these have a double Aspect:

(1.) Towards Christ, *My Father, My God*.

(2.) Towards the Apostles and Believers, *To your Father, and to your God*.

First, Is the motion, *I ascend*. For understanding this Mystery of Christ's Ascension, briefly let us consider it in three Particulars.

I. Consider it as a Motion, therein the Reality of it.

II. As an Action, therein the Cause of it.

III. In the Intention, that shews the Purpose of it.

I. For the Truth of his Ascension, it was a real motion. As was his Resurrection out of the Grave a real motion; so was his Ascension into the Heavens. It was not a disappearing only, and vanishing out of their sight; nor (as others erroneously teach) an alteration of state and condition only: but a real translation and removal of his body from earth to heaven. The Scripture expresses it in words of property and reality, *I leave the world*, saith Christ, *and go to the Father*; Joh. xvi. 28. *He was taken up, and a Cloud received him*, Acts i. 9. *He was received up into Heaven*, Mark xvi. 19. *He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven*, Luke xxiv. 51. What Paul saith of the Resurrection, 'tis true also of his Ascension: They that made it only spiritual, turned it into an Allegory, they destroyed the Faith. In this case we may invert the Words of the Apostle, *Litæra vivificat, Spiritus occidit*; the Literal sense is the saving sense. To turn his Ascension into a Spiritual Notion, is dangerous and deadly.

II. It is an Action, that's implied in this Word, *Ascendo*. 'Tis one of those Motions, which the Philosopher saith, hath the Principle and Cause of it within the thing moved; as his coming out of the Grave, 'tis called not a Resuscitation, but a Resurrection, not a rising by another, but a raising by himself. Indeed sometimes Christ's going up to Heaven is ascribed to his Father, and so 'tis called an Assumption, Acts ii. 33. *Being by the right hand of God exalted*. And, in Subordination to this, Christ prays his Father to *glorifie him*, John xvii. 5. But here, and elsewhere, 'tis ascribed to his own Person; and that makes it properly to be called an Ascension: And this his Ascension he caused partly by the Power of his God-head; his eternal Spirit, as it quickned him, and raised him from the dead, so likewise it lifted him up, and mounted him up to Heaven: and then partly it was effected, and wrought by that supernatural Quality, and endowment of his glorified Body, by which it was able to move and dispose it self, without any resistance or difficulty, as himself pleased. As, for a time, he walked upon the Water; so now, by that power, he walks upon the liquid Air: and the *Clouds are the dust of his feet*, as the Prophet *Nabum* speaks. *Elias*, he needed the support of Angels, like

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Serm. I. Horses and Chariots when he was taken up to Heaven : Christ indeed had the attendance, but not the assistance and support of Angels in his glorious Ascension.

III. The End and Purpose of this Ascension, that was manifold.

1. To assume that glory, which he had laid aside for our sakes, and which was due to him upon his sufferings. *Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and so to enter into his Glory ?* Luke xxiv. 26. His ascending into Heaven was his entering not only in *Regnum*, but in *Regiam gloriæ*. Heaven is not only the Kingdom, but the chief Place of the Kingdom, the Court and Palace of Glory.

2. He ascended to triumph over all our spiritual Enemies : as the Roman Conquerors in their Ovations and Triumphs, ascended into the Capitol. Thus David describes the end of his Ascension ; *When he ascended up on high, he led Captivity captive*. As Conquerors lead their Captives in Chains, before and after their Chariots ; so did Christ triumph gloriously over Death, and Hell, and Satan. *Rise up Barak, and lead thy Captivity captive, thou Son of Abinoam*. In his Passion he did subdue our Enemies ; that was *Campus Victoriæ*, the Field of his Victory : but, in his Ascension, there he triumphed over them ; that was *Currius Triumphi*, the Chariot of his Triumph.

3. He ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for us. He had purchased it by his Passion, he prepares it for us by his Ascension, John xiv. 3. Heaven was shut up against us, as was Paradise to Adam ; but Christ, he makes a re-entry for us, and in our name he takes possession of it : Ephes. ii. 6. *He hath made us sit together in heavenly places with Christ. Conscendite, caro, & sanguis ; usurpâstis cælum, & regnum in Christo*. Tertul.

4. He ascended up to heaven, from thence to send down the Holy Ghost upon us. John xvi. 7. *'Tis expedient I go away ; if I go not, the Comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you*. 'Twas the great fruit of his Ascension, the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost. This Peter declares in his first Sermon upon the day of Pentecost Acts ii. 33. *Therefore, being by, the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men*, saith David. As Conquerors in their Triumphs, have their *Missilia*, are munificent to their Followers ; having made up our peace, as a fruit of our peace, he obtains for us the Holy Ghost.

5. He ascended into Heaven, there to appear before God, as a gracious prevailing Intercessor for us. He is our Agent in Heaven, negotiates and solicits his Father for us. He enters into Heaven, as the High-Priest, with all our Names on his Shoulders, and on his Breast ; there he tenders his merits for us, interposes his mediation, presents our Prayers, and makes them accepted of God the Father. *Tantum de motu*. Now follows,

Secondly, The Term of this ascent. And 'tis not *Terminus unde*. He saith not, *I ascend from you*, that was uncomfortable ; *Adeo, recedo*, before, made their Hearts sad : but here he specifies the Term, whither he ascends. And whereas there might have been many ways of expressing of that ; as,

I. *In cælum*, to ascend into Heaven, Mark xvi. 19. Or,

II. *In gloriam*, to enter into glory, Luke xxiv. 26.

III. *In regnum*, to receive a Kingdom. Luke xix. 22. *far above Angels, and Principalities, and Powers*, Ephes. i. 21. All of them magnificent Descriptions of his Ascension ; but see, here Christ insists on none of these, but *I ascend to my Father*. All the other fall short of this :

1. This makes his Departure to be better endured. *If ye love me, ye would rejoyce, because I go to the Father*, John xiv. 28.

2. It makes his Ascension more glorious. Many other accessions of Glory there were in his Ascension ; that *all things are put under his feet*, Eph. i. 22. that's but *gloria Scabelli*, the glory of his Foot-stool : but to sit at the right hand of God, to be most high in the glory of God the Father, that's the substantial, transcendent Glory, that's *gloria Throni*, the glory of his Throne.

3. 'Tis the sweetest and most comfortable expression, nay the very beautiful

tificial expression. 'Tis that which *Paul* makes the comfortable Death, *Absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*, 2 Cor. v. 8. *We shall be taken up in the clouds, and be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. And that's *specificatio Termini*.

We come to the Amplification and Description of this Term, in a twofold relation :

1. Of Father.

2. Of God. And both these respectively,

(1.) To Christ: and then,

(2.) To Us.

1. God is Christ's Father; that's in reference to his Divinity, an high and hidden Mystery, to be believed and adored, not to be pryed and searched into. He is the second Person in the glorious Trinity, *begotten of God the Father before all worlds*. And as this Truth is to be adored for the Mystery of it; so 'tis to be embraced for the comfort of it.

1. It assures us of the prevailing efficacy of his Mediation. Our Intercession, that pleads our Cause in Heaven, is no stranger, or friend only; but the great Favourite of Heaven, the only begotten, the dearly beloved Son of God; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*: then comes, *Ask of me, and I will give thee*, Psal. ii. 7, 8. God the Father will deny nothing to his beloved Son. If he plead our Cause, we are sure to prevail.

2. As it strengthens the efficacy of his Mediation; so it magnifies the mercy of our Adoption. Christ is the Son of God, his only Son, his beloved Son, *in whom his Soul delighteth*. What needs such a Father of such a Son ever think of adopting strangers into his Family, and to make them his Sons? *Sarah's* Speech is the usual voice of Natural Parents, *The Son of a Bond-woman shall not be heir with my Son Isaac*. Adoption, 'tis a remedy in Law, to make up the want of Natural Issue. Who will engraft a wild Olive-branch into a fruitful Olive-tree? Yet this is God's gracious dealing with us, he takes us into the fellowship of his beloved Son. Not only *Ishmael* the Bond-Son, but *Eleazar of Damascus* his Bond-servant, is made Co-heir with *Isaac*. 'Twas not necessity, but mercy, that moved him to do it.

2. God is Christ's God too; that's in respect of Christ's Humanity: so Christ is inferiour, and subject to the Father; as a Creature is subject to the Creator. In this inference the Scripture calls our Saviour, *the Servant of God*: *Behold my servant, whom I have chosen*, Mat. xii. 18. St. Paul. joyns them both together, 2 Cor. xi. 31. *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. It must be a Rule to direct our understanding of divers places of Scripture which speak variously of Christ.

1. Sometimes in terms of Equality with the Father.

2. Sometimes in terms of Subjection and Inferiority.

It posed the Doctors of the Jews, they could not reconcile these two Truths, that Christ was *David's* Lord, and yet *David's* Son. It made the Jews imagine a double Messias: one, the Son of *Joseph*, an afflicted Man; another, the Son of *David*, potent and glorious.

(2.) But then, we have here a second Relation, and 'tis an exemplification of that in Christ; it conforms us to the Image of his Son, *that he might be the first born amongst many brethren*, Rom. viii. 29. *He ascends to our Father, and to our God*. These blessed relations, *Our Father, our God*, let us lay hold on both of them; sunder them not, part with neither of them; joyn them in our Faith, joyn them in our Comfort, joyn them in our Confidence, joyn them in our Duty. They are two great supports of Faith, *Posse* and *Velle*, in *Pater* and *Deus*.

1. Joyn them in our Faith; first *our Father*, then *our God*. Were he not our Father, yet he were *Deus in se*, he is God in himself; and he were *Deus noster*, our God by power and dominion: but by fruition, and love, and sweetness of Affection, so he must be our Father, and then he will be our God. These two, *Meus* and *Noster*, they are Faith's Possessives, they are the embracings of Faith: by them we lay hold on God with both hands; *Our Father, our God*.

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2. Joyn both these Relations to our comfort. 'Tis the only comfortable way of apprehending of him, to interpose his gracious Paternity and Father-hood, 'twixt us and his Deity. Cloath him, with this gracious Relation of *our Father*, and then we may approach to him in his glorious Relation of *our God*. Here Mercy and Majesty are met together, Grace and Glory embrace each other.

3. Joyn them in our Confidence; *Our Father, our God*. If he be *our Father*, then he is *our God*; it will make all the Attributes and Excellencies of his God-head to become ours. If he be *my Father* and *my God*, his Power is for me, his Wisdom is for me, his Justice, his Mercy; this Relation gives us interest in them all, they shall be useful and beneficial for us. Ye know what the loving Father saith to his Son in the Gospel, *Son, all that I have is thine*.

4. We joyn them both in our Duty. Look upon him in both Relations, remember him so to be *thy Father*, that thou forget'st him not to be *thy God*. As they are *termini fiduciæ*, grounds of Confidence: so they must be *termini reverentiæ* motives of reverence. Comfort and Confidence, may well consist with awe and reverence. What saith St. Peter? *If ye call him Father, who, without respect of persons, judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear*. Faith and Fear, answers to Father and God. See how Christ calls upon his Father, and imitates him; *I thank thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*, Mat. xi. 25. No Relation on God's part, or Interest on our part, or Priviledge from both, must exempt us from the duty of Fear and Reverence. Neither the assurance of God's being our Father, or Christ our Brother, or we Coheirs with him, must make us lay aside the thoughts of both of them to be our God. Away with such Apprehensions, or Gestures, or Representations of such equal relation, as should make us lay aside our Homage and Reverence.

But then again, put these Relations together, *My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God*: and then take a threefold consideration of them:

1. In Conjunction.

2. In Distinction.

3. In Subordination.

1. In Conjunction. Christ and we have all one Father, the same God. *Ephes. iii. 14, 15. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family of Heaven and Earth is named*. Hence it is, that Christ is called, *the first-born among many Brethren*.

1. We have the same Original. *He is begotten of God*, and we likewise are *born of God*, as St. John speaks frequently in his Epistle.

2. Christ and we are all of the same Family and Household, all of us *Filii Familiæ*, as the Patriarchs said of themselves, *We are all one man's sons*.

3. We have all the same Inheritance allotted to us. *If sons, then Heirs*, and *joint-heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. Not put off with portions, but heirs of the Promises.

2. See these Relations in their Distinctions. *Christus nunquam dixit Pater noster, sed Pater meus, aut Pater vester; sic jungit ut distinguat; sic distinguit, ut non se-jungat*. Aug. Tract. 21. in Joan. Though there be a Conjunction, yet Christ puts a difference, makes a distinction. He saith not, *I ascend to our Father, and to our God*; but, with a note of difference, *To my Father, and your Father, to my God, and to your God*. Indeed there is the same relation, but a diversity in the ground and foundation of it. God is otherwise Christ's Father, otherwise our Father. He is his Father from all Eternity; he is our Father in the dispensation of time: he is his Father by Nature, ours by Grace: his Father by Generation, ours by Adoption. He is God's Son, as Joseph was Jacob's Son, by Birth; we are his Sons, as Manasseh and Ephraim were Jacob's Sons, by Adoption. He is *filius natus*, born a Son: we are *filius facti*, made Sons. He begat Christ of his own Substance naturally, necessarily: but 'tis of his own will that he begat us, Jam. i. 18.

3. Here is a Subordination in these Relations. First, *My Father*, then *your Father*; *My God*, then *your God*. Here is a Priority and Precedency in Christ's relation;

not

not for dignity only, but for casualty to; our Sonship depends upon Christ's Sonship; *We are adopted in him*, he merited it, and purchased it for us. *He made us accepted in his well-beloved*, Ephes. 1. 6. Our inheritance depends upon his being Heir. St. Peter tells us, *we are begot to this heavenly inheritance by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. Amongst men, 'tis the death of the eldest Son, that makes the younger children become Heirs; but here, 'tis the Resurrection of Christ our Elder Brother, that gives right to our Inheritance. The Husbandmen say in the Gospel, *This is the Heir, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours*: They think to inherit heaven by Occupancy. No, 'tis quite contrary here; Christ, the Heir of all, is revived, and ascended; therefore the Inheritance shall be ours.

Serm. I.

For Use of all: *Is Christ ascended into heaven?*

First, Let's Worship him, now he sits on his Throne. The Disciples, when they saw him taken up into heaven, 'tis said, *they worshipped him*, Luke xxiv. 52. When Solomon was placed on his Father's Throne, all the Kings servants came and did their homage to him.

Secondly, Is he advanced to the right hand of God? Let's rejoice in his glory; When Solomon was crowned, all the People *shouted for joy*; *Behold, the Crown which is Solomons, with which his Father hath crowned him in the day of the gladness of his heart*. Let Satan and his Instruments, like *Adonijah*, and his Complices, flie and hide themselves for fear: but let the hearts of them rejoice that love the Lord.

Thirdly, Is he now at the right hand of God? Make use of this his advancement. When *Elias* ascended up to heaven, what was the suit that *Elisba* made to him? *O, that a double portion of thy Spirit may rest upon me*. Many of us snatch at his Mantle, wear his Livery, take up the profession of Christians, but heed not his Spirit. What saith Paul? *If any have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*. *If we be Sons, God will send the Spirit of his Son into our hearts*. He is entered into heaven as our Advocate and Intercessor, commend thy Cause to him; send up thy Petitions, he is the great Master of Requests, he is able to speed all our Petitions. In all thy necessities and distresses, call upon him, as *Hezekiah* did in his distress, *LORD, I am oppressed, undertake for me*.

Fourthly, In our departure out of the world, imitate him in his leaving of the World.

I. Be able to say, *Ascendo*; that's a Speech of Certainty: be sure thou knowest whither to go, that it is an Ascension, a going up to heaven. Alas! how many men die, that know not whether their Spirit goes upwards, or downwards, as *Solomon* speaks: *Paul's assurance should be the assurance of us all*; *We know when this Tabernacle is dissolved, we have an House in heaven*.

II. Let it be *Ascendo*, an act of Preparation. Christ was upon his ascent, even before he ascended, in thought, in preparation; so should we do, to die daily, to ascend daily: *Seek those things that are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God*. Let your conversation be still in heaven before-hand. He that's to remove to another house, will often go thither, and fit and prepare it.

III. *Ascendo*, that's a Voluntary act; 'twas not a rapture, but a free and voluntary motion: Such let our departure be; not dying out of necessity of Nature; content to die, because we can live no longer: but willingly embracing, and welcoming death, yielding up our Spirits, offering up our Souls; *O, when shall I appear before the presence of God!*

IV. Our *Ascendo* must be *in actu fidei*, to our Father; make sure of that, that thy Faith lay hold of that blessed relation. *I know whom I have trusted: I go to my Father's house; Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*.

V. Our ascent must be in the Profession of Christian community, *My God*, and *your God*: Die in the holy communion of Saints. Happy Christian, that lives and dies in the Peace of the Church, in the fellowship of Believers; that departs out of the bosom of the Church his Mother, to enter into the bosom of God his Father.

Serm. I.

VI. Our Ascent must be *in actu Charitatis*. Christ ascending owns those that had wronged him, and forsaken him, for his Brethren; forgives all unkindnesses. Be sure to imitate his Ascension in this too. Let that Charity, which then is the reigning Grace, have a perfect work in thee; forgive all, embrace all with love and charity.

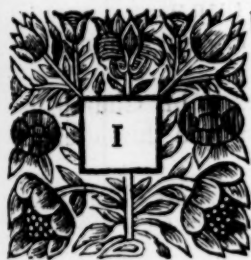
VII. Our Ascent must be *in actu Consolationis*. Christ sends Messages of comfort to his Disciples; so should a dying Christian minister words of comfort and counsel to all about him. Speak the Language of heaven, when thou art going to heaven.

THREE
SERMONS
 Preached on
WHIT-SUNDAY.

The First Sermon.

St. LUKE xi. 13.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?



If we cast back our eyes to the former Verses, we shall find in the Context a gracious Encouragement of Christ to his Disciples, and in them to the whole body of the Church, to quicken and stir them up to the exercise of Prayer, the unfolding, and representing of all their wants and desires before the Throne of Grace, to be supplied and fulfilled.

Indeed were we well acquainted with the Nature of this Duty of Invocation, did we thoroughly consider,

First, The great Use and Necessity of it, it is the Lock and Key of Heaven, *Condus & Promus Cæli*, it opens to us all the rich Store-houses of God's rich mercies, 'tis *fitula gratiæ*, (as *Bernard* terms it) that, by which we draw water out of the wells of Salvation. Without it, we are no better than Intruders upon any blessing. Or,

Secondly, Did we consider the great Honour and Dignity it puts upon us, it gives us free access into the Presence of God, it maintains an holy intercourse and communion 'twixt us and Heaven. Or,

Thirdly, Did we consider the sweetness and comfort that arises from it, it mitigates our sorrows, settles and composes our distractions, ravishes our spirits with joy unspeakable and glorious: Were these well thought on, we should think there were little need to enforce the Duty upon us, or to quicken us to it.

But then, on the contrary, when we consider,

First, the great Alienation and Estrangement of our Souls from God.

Secondly, Our secret Guiltiness and mis-giving Thoughts, that make us shie to come into his presence.

Thirdly, The Dulness and Listlessness of our hearts to perform any spiritual service; we all say, *O what a weariness is it to serve the LORD!* Mal. i. 13. Or,

Fourthly, Our Infidelity and inbred Atheism, that makes us think there is no profit in it, that our Prayers vanish in the air, and God regards them not.

These things considered, we all stand in need of the most earnest Incitements, and Provocations to it, and Christ doth it accordingly.

First, It is no small encouragement for us, *Quod docet*, that he here prescribes us a
 Form

Serm. I

Form of Prayer, *Ver. 2.* a great favour no doubt, though the world grows weary of it. We know not what to ask; but he himself teaches us, frames our supplication, that it might be accepted. Should a King draw a Petition for a poor Suppliant, to be put up to himself, 'twere a sign he would grant it.

Secondly, Here is a further encouragement, *Quod dirigit*, He teacheth us not only what, but how to pray, directs in what manner to commence our suit, so to pray, that we may be sure to speed. Without this second, though the matter be good, yet if we fail in the holy manner, it may be unsuccessfull. *O quam neare non vult, qui sibi qualiter extorquere possis ostendit!* saith the Father. Fervently, constantly, confidently, are the three Qualifications of our Prayers, that Christ directs us to.

Thirdly, *Quod hortatur*, that's a great encouragement. He is earnest in perswading, and exhorting to this Duty. *Be of good comfort, for he calleth thee*, Mark x. 49. Nay, more than so, he invites and perswades thee; *Hortatur, ut petas; & negabit quod petis*: saith St. *Augustine*. Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, saith Christ to his Church: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely, Cant. ii. 14. Surely he will never deny thee, that doth so lovingly perswade thee to seek unto him.

Fourthly, But then the main Encouragement is the great assurance he gives us that our Prayers shall be accepted; nay, they shall be granted, nay, more than so, they shall be rewarded.

I. *Acceptatio*, that's one encouragement. 'Tis comfort to know, that this service is *officium Deo gratum*; that God takes it in good part that we pray unto him, that he despises not our prayers, but graciously rewards them.

II. *Impetratio*, He not only likes them, but yields to them, fulfils our desires, subscribes, and signs our Petitions; puts them not off with bare good acceptance, but answers them all, and fully satisfies them.

III. *Remuneratio*, over and above he rewards them. *Pray to thy Father in secret, and he shall reward thee openly*, Mat. vi. 6. He gives us more than we ask, even because we ask. He doth not only regard us, but relieves us; nay, over and above, rewards us, when we pray unto him.

The Text then, 'tis a gracious Assurance that Christ gives to his Church, that they shall speed in their Prayers that they put up unto him. And this Assurance, 'tis as strong as can be.

First, 'Tis not a bare intimation, or hopeful insinuation, that we are like to speed; like that half promise, and hint of hopes in *Zeph. ii. 3.* *Seek ye the Lord; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger*; or, as that of *Joel ii. 14.* *Turn to the LORD; Who knows but he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?* Not only so; nay,

Secondly, This assurance here, is not a full and absolute promise only, that God, will hear, and be gracious, (though that be much; give Faith but a Promise from God, and it will work wonders, but) the assurance in the Text, 'tis *Certitudo per argumentum*, Christ proves it, and confirms it to us by dint of argument and Demonstration. He contends and disputes with our infidelity and doubting; so that, if we have any Faith, or reason, or sense almost, we cannot gain-say it. *Come, let's reason together*, saith God in *Isai.* *Securum me facis, quia dixisti; quanto securiorem, quia probasti?* What *Tertullian* speaks of God's swearing to us, we may well say here of Christ's proving and arguing with us; *O nos beatos, quorum causa Christus arguit!* *O nos miseros, qui Christi arguenti non credimus!* Happy men that we are, for whose assurance Christ will argue thus; and wretched men shall we be, if, when Christ thus argues with us, we will not yield to him.

Now the argument which Christ uses here, it is fitted and accommodated to our reason and apprehension. 'Tis framed by way of similitude: A double similitude.

First, Christ argues à *similitudine amici*, Verse 5. and that's hopeful. *Which of you shall have a friend, and shall say unto him, Do this for me*—Friendship called upon by importunity, and that stirred up by necessity, admits no denial. What friend so faithful, loving, helpful to his dearest friend, as God to us? *Ye are my friends*, saith Christ, *John xv. 14* *Abraham was called the friend of God*, James ii. 27. That's a good argument, an hopeful assurance. But yet may be a doubting Faith thinks

thinks it not so clear and convincing; friendship may be forfeited, and grow cold, and break off: Christ therefore uses a second and more enforcing Argument. Serm. I.

Secondly, Argues à similitudine Patris. Which of you, that is a Father, can deny his Child any thing? Suppose a friend should prove unkind to his friend; yet a Father will not be unnatural to his Child. *Frigit Amicitia præ visceribus paternis*; the bosom of a friend is nothing so affectionate and tender, as the bowels of a father. Now God is not our Friend only, but our father also. What can Infidelity object against this assurance? *If you that be evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much* —

So then, in this Discourse of Christ, we may observe these three Particulars.

First, Is the Proof or Argument which our Saviour useth, that's in the similitude; *If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children.*

Secondly, Is the Conclusion that's drawn from that Argument; *Your heavenly Father shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

Thirdly, Is the Illation or Inference of the Conclusion out of the Argument: that's *In quanto magis*, How much more? So that,

First, Here is the Proposition of the Similitude in the Argument.

Secondly, Here is the Reddition and Application of it in the Conclusion.

Thirdly, Here is the Proportion and Degree of the Similitude in the Illation; *How much more?* The

First thing observable is the Argument or Similitude; and of it we may take a double view.

First, We will consider *rem substratam*, the Matter it self of the Similitude: and in the next place,

Secondly, We will consider the Use and Improvement, that Christ makes of it.

First, The Matter of the Similitude, that's in these words, *Ye that are evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children.* And in it are couched three Truths supposed by our Saviour.

I. The first Truth supposed is, *Vos estis mali*, You, all the sort of you; here is your state and condition, *Ye are all evil.*

II. A second Truth supposed is, *Vos mali nōtis bona facere*, you know how to do some things that are good and commendable; and then,

III. A third Truth supposed is, *Vos mali nōtis benefacere liberis*; You that are evil, have this good Principle preserved in you, you know and desire to do good to your Children.

I. *Vos estis mali*, that's the first supposal; You are all evil. And 'tis no light taste or tincture of evil, that Christ objects to them; no, 'tis *quævis nequitia*, that points out the very dregs, and sink, and sediment of evil, that is still within them. And who were they? Some Godless, and prophane, and notorious Ones of the world, sinners of the first magnitude, murdering *Cain*, and rebellious *Abalom*, and traitorous *Judas*? this Title fits close to them, we all yield such to be wicked men. Nay; not only these, but the more restrained, and well-ordered men, those that are free from gross pollutions, and criminal stains, for humane conversation inoffensive, yet this Title of *nequitia* reaches them too; none of them free from this imputation, no, not one. Nay, the men that Christ speaks to, were far beyond these.

1. They were his own Disciples, *Ver. 1.* Men, that had put themselves under Christ's Doctrine and Discipline. More then so;

2. They were men Regenerate, such as might call God Father, such as God did own for his children: He acknowledges himself their heavenly Father; *Quos filios Dei dicit, eosdem malos dicit*, saith *Augustine*. Nay;

3. They were very devout and religious men, they sued to Christ to be taught to pray and call upon God, men given to devotion. Expositours take them to be the Apostles, *Fruetus centesimi Christiani*, as the Father speaks, of the best sort, such as brought forth an hundred fold. Yet notwithstanding all that dignity of Apostleship, and priviledge of Sonship, and progress of piety and devotion, *Quamvis Patriarcha sit, quamvis Propheta, quamvis Apostolus, dicitur iis à Domino, Si vos, cum sitis*

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fitis mali, saith St. Hierom. Christ tells them what they are, and what they must judge themselves to be. There is that in them, that justly fastens upon them this imputation; *Estis mali*, ye are evil and sinful.

It must put us all, the best of us, to the blush, and make us cry out, *We are unclean, we are unclean*. It will teach us to take up St. John's confession, and say with sorrow and shame, *If we say, we have no sin, there is no truth in us*. And that, saith St. Augustine, was no complemental speech of humility, as Pelagius did blanch it, *Non tantum humiliter, sed & veraciter se dicit peccatorem*. If we say, we have no sin, he doth not say, *Non est humilitas in nobis, sed non est veritas in nobis*; 'tis not want of Humility, but want of Truth too, to say, *We are no sinners*. As Chrysostom observes of Paul's Confession, that he was not worthy to be an Apostle, it was not a fit of Humility, but a pang of Conscience that moved him to that confession. Why so? he goes about to prove it, saith he, *Because I persecuted the Church of God*. Humility may say it, but 'tis conscience and compunction that makes him thus ready and forward to prove it.

How then are these Disciples said to be evil?

(1.) 'Tis not *conditione naturæ*, not in respect of their first Creation; as the Manichees expounded and perverted this Text. Their natural and substantial condition was not evil, or wicked. τὰ *natura* not *εἶδος*, but *διδασκ*, saith St. Basil: *Sin is not a substantial, but a moral corruption*. The good God made all things very good, we came all pure and unspotted out of his hand.

(2.) They were so not *totali corruptione*; it implies not a total, compleat corruption. Their original, 'twas much purged and healed, and a seed and principle of goodness and sanctity infused into them.

(3.) They were not evil and wicked, *æstimatione divinâ*. God accounts otherwise of his children than of wicked men. *Their spot is not the spot of his children*. He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob. The evil which he sees in them by the discerning eye of his Knowledge, even that he sees not with the revenging eye of his Justice. They are Saints by calling, washed, and cleansed, and accepted in his sight.

How far forth then are they called evil?

1. They are said to be evil, *Reliquiarum malignitate*. In the holiest men there are still the reliques and remainders of much sinful corruption. The Jews report, that when Noah sent forth his Sons to people the World, he delivered to every one of them *reliquias*, *Admai*, some reliques of old Adam. It may be fabulous for the History, but 'tis true in the Morality: The reliques of his sinful corruption cleave too close to us. 'Tis not here, his Head to one, his Hand to another, as in the Story; but all the Members of old Adam, the whole body of sin is remaining in us, we carry it about with us; *In optimis nonnihil est pessimi*, saith the Father. Our original sin is perfectly pardoned, but yet imperfectly purged. In our regeneration we are freed, *à morte peccati*, but not *à morbo peccati*; recovered from the death of sin, but not from the disease of it. Those same *panni menstruati*, that Isaiah complains of, the defilements of our Conception and Birth-sin, stick still upon us. "Adam's fall, saith Bernard, cast us not only into a puddle of mire, which did pollute us; but upon an heap of stones, that did bruise and maim us. Till those maims are recovered, we are still liable to this title of shame, *Estis mali*, You are evil and sinful.

2. They are said to be Evil, *Primitiarum imperfectione*. The good that is in us by our New-Birth, 'tis evil and imperfect; so enfeebled by the resistance and conflict of corruption, that justly we may deserve to be called *evil* and *sinful*. There is in us that *civile bellum interiorum affectionum*, as St. Augustine terms it; or, as elsewhere he calls it, that same *rixa & jurgium inter carnem & spiritum*; Hagar and Peninnah, under the same roof, vexing each other; Hagar insulting over Sarah, the bond-woman over the free; Ishmael over-topping of Isaac; Esau in the womb of Grace struggling with Jacob; the House of Saul still quarrelling and contending with the House of David; and thereby increasing our sin and miseries. *Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui*. The best men find, and feel, and sigh at these corruptions. Even they that are clean, are not all clean, they had need wash their feet, John xiii. *In bono itinere pulverem colligis*, saith St. Bernard. They that chuse their way, and pick their steps,

steps, yet their feet gather soil and defilement. *Purge out the old Leaven, as you are unleavened*, 1 Cor. v. 7. Unleavened they are, and yet old Leaven to be purged out.

3. They are said to be *Evil*, *facta cum Deo comparatione*. Christ puts us here into a compare with God. His goodness in himself, and his goodness to us. In compare with him, the most eminent Saints are nothing but corruption. *Cujus participatione sumus justii, ejus comparatione sumus injusti*: That sanctity we have by participation from him, will appear no sanctity in comparison with him. The Stars are unclean in his sight, and he finds fault in his Angels. The infinite splendour of his holiness turns the Sun into blood, the Moon into Sackcloth, and the Stars withdraw their light, when he shines forth. One view of God's Holiness made Abraham moulder away into dust and ashes. One glimpse of this Glory makes Isaiah cry out, *Wo is me, I am undone, I have seen the Lord. I have seen thee with mine eyes*, saith Job, *therefore I abhor my self in dust and ashes*. That's the first Truth supposed, *Vos estis mali*, Ye are evil and sinful.

II. A second Truth supposed is, *Mali nōstis bona facere*. Though by nature you are evil and sinful, tainted with corruption, yet, even in that decayed condition, there are some remainders of right reason, some impressions of equity, some Principles of common honesty, that are preserved in you. Nay, they that are evil, not partially only, as these to whom Christ speaks, but totally and compleatly, no way changed or bettered, yet have some Truths inbred in them, some prints of goodness engraven upon them. The Image of God, in which we were created, is not wholly defaced: As he said of a great Wit miscarried, there are *vestigia magni, sed neglecti ingenii*; some lineaments of that goodly portraiture in which we were framed.

Indeed our spiritual endowments, they are totally lost; all, in respect of them, are become abominable: but the natural part, in some moral Principles, is still abiding in us. The Soul is like some plundered Palace, the plate and the hangings, and all the rich furniture, all carried away; but yet some of the Fabrick is left standing still. These remainders of reason, they are like Job's Messengers, that *escaped with their lives*, when the rest were destroyed: Those glimmerings of Truth, as a few dim Stars appearing in a dark night. Doth not nature teach us to deal justly with all men? Doth it not startle, and shrink back, and look ghastly at some abominations? The Dictates of Morality that were stamped upon our Souls, though much dimmed and darkened, do yet remain legible in our souls and consciences. Even an unregenerate conscience, it will check and give back at some gross impieties; it will cheer and encourage us in our honest practices. Virtues without grace, are no better than Vices, little indeed for spiritual purposes. The remainders of Nature are in themselves unprofitable: *Sine Christo, omnis virtus in vitio est*, saith St. Hierom. No saving Truth is known but by Revelation. *Cui veritas cognita sine Deo? Cui Deus sine Christo?* saith Tertullian. In point of salvation they fail and fall short; but yet in civil and humane respects, they are useful and commendable.

These natural endowments are some ways beneficial.

1. *Innocentius vivunt*. They that cross not these dictates of Nature, but observe and obey them, they live more innocent and unblameable, and so are more commodious, and useful to mankind. God purposely left them in us to keep and uphold some order in the world. As Nebuchadnezzar, when he carried the Princes, and chief men into captivity, left some of the People behind to till the Land, lest it became a wilderness; so these impressions of Nature are continued in us to civilize, and cultivate the Sons of men. Did not the Principles of Morality bear some way in mens lives, the World could not subsist, common justice and honesty would not be maintained.

2. *Temporaliter remunerantur*. Though they cannot avail to procure grace and salvation (you can carry the water no higher than the Fountain-head is; Nature works not beyond its own sphere); yet God vouchsafes them some temporal rewards. Thus saith St. Augustine the Romans, for their Justice and Temperance, wherein they did excel, were rewarded by God with victory and prosperity.

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3. *Mitius puniuntur.* They that live according to these Dictates of Nature, and Rules of right reason, though for want of Christ, they fall short of heaven, yet, their account will be more easie. Such shall have a more tolerable damnation. The *Heathen*, and all the *People that know not God*, are all turned into Hell; but yet *Cato* suffers less than *Cataline*; *Socrates*, than *Nero*.

4. *Propius absunt à salute.* The Conversion and salvation of such men, 'tis more easie and hopeful. These remainders of Reason and Morality, they are stocks, upon which Grace and Religion are more kindly engrafted. Nature at the best, 'tis but a Crab-stock, brings forth no fruit to eternal life; but graff Grace upon it, and it will fructifie to salvation. Civil honesty hath a more kindly change into Piety and Sanctity, then unnatural debauchery. A sober, a peaceable, an humble man, in the sphere of Morality, is more easily converted, is not so far off from the Kingdom of God, as those outrageous wretches, that sin against Nature. That's the second Truth supposed.

III. A third Truth supposed is, *Mali nōstis benefacere liberis.* Amongst the ruins and rubbish of decayed Nature, this Principle God hath kept and preserved. Even Godless men have this impression in them, to love their Children, to seek their well-fare, and to do good unto them. *You that are evil, know how to give good things to your children.* God hath planted this secret and forcible instinct in the bowels of all men. *πάν γένος φιλότιμον*, said the Heathen Poet. No Nation so barbarous, but their bowels are tender to the fruit of their body. This Principle is preserved, *ὡς μαργαρίτης ἐν σπυρί*, as a precious stone in a heap of mire. Some other Principles have but *reliquiæ tenuissimæ impressionis* (as *Parisienſis* speaks) are but dark and dim in the souls of men: This Propensity of Nature, it is strong and vigorous. God's love to mankind, was careful to preserve this tender affection, and he is well pleased with it. *In alio sua quemque natura delectat.* 'Tis his great and gracious work to do good to mankind. 'Tis said of Physitians, but it is most true of God, *τὸ θεῶν τὸ ἐν σπυρί φιλανθρωπία*, He delights to be called, *The Preserver of men*. He hath provided for this sweet disposition in our first original: He made us all of one blood; created not men as he did the Angels, *seorsim*, several and independent one from another; but multiplied mankind by propagation from one original root, and the sap of the root is this kindly affection.

This Storge and natural affection, 'tis many ways useful.

1. 'Tis *Glutinum naturæ*; 'tis the glue and fodder that cements the World, and holds it together. Mankind would perish and decay, did not this bond of Nature joyn us close together,

2. 'Tis *Vehiculum Disciplinæ*. This love of Parents to their children, 'tis the most kindly conveyance of Nurture and Discipline. Thus *Wisdom* in the *Proverbs*, when it teacheth her Scholars, takes upon her the Person of a Father, and a Mother; *My Son, hear the Instructions of thy Father, and forsake not the Law of thy Mother. What my Son? and what the Son of my Womb? and what the Son of my Vows?* How forcible are these perswasions to Piety and Vertue?

3. 'Tis *Calcar industriæ*. This love of Parents to their Children, to provide for them, is the great Spur and Incitement to Labour and Industry. The Labour of men, 'tis not all for the belly, 'tis most for their bowels, to provide for posterity. *Fathers they lay up for their Children*, saith *St. Paul*. The Plummet that keeps that same *πρόβος γυρίσεως*, the wheels of the World in the continual motion, is this *pondus naturæ*, this sway of Affection, that they may leave their Riches and Substance for their Babes.

4. 'Tis *Condimentum molestiæ*. This tender affection sweetnes all that toyl, that's incident unto Parents: the pains of bringing forth, and the care of bringing up, that same *τεροφορεῖν*, and *τρέφεσθαι*, that *St. Paul* speaks of; 'tis an easie burthen to this loving Affection. *In hoc aut non laboratur, aut labor ipse amatur.* The hardest labours are made easie and acceptable by this sweet affection.

5. 'Tis *Incentivum Pietatis*; 'tis an effectual Motive to stir up to Piety. *Salvian* presses and enforces this consideration: "Dost thou love thy Children, and tender their welfare? O, then be religious and devout, so thou shalt transmit a blessing

"to them. Piety entails a blessing to posterity; Whereas a wicked man troubles his own house, and conveys a curse to them. Serm. I.

The want of this natural affection, St. Paul makes a brand of a Reprobate mind, *Rom. i. 31.* He foretells it as a prodigy, and a sad prognostick of the last, and worst, and most perillous times, *2 Tim. iii. 3.* then shall men be without natural affection. Amongst that rabble of Monsters, that he there reckons up, he puts *ἀνθρώποις*.

We have seen the first Thing, *rem substratam*, the matter of the similitude: A word of the second.

Secondly, Of the use and improvment that Christ makes of it. This Similitude God here assumes to himself, offers himself to us in the notion of a Father; to represent his care and regard of us; thinks it not sufficient to acquaint us with the riches of his gracious Providence, that he is our God, and Maker, and Preserver; but delights to speak to us in the most familiar Language of Love, conveys his thoughts to us in these sweet expressions. Indeed, his Love in it self, 'tis inconceivable, it passeth knowledge, *Ephes. iii. 19.* To make us feel the sweetness of it, he assures it to us in the most pregnant and forcible representations.

See that, in three manifestations of it;

I. He expresses himself in the most kindly, and comfortable resemblance. Wouldst thou conceive his all-seeing Providence always held over thee? He is a Watchman to thee, keeps sentinel, *never slumbers, nor sleeps*; He hath *ἀπολυστοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ*, his eyes are still over thee. Wouldst thou apprehend his constant care to feed, and provide for thee? He is thy Shepherd, to feed thee and sustain thee. *Dominus exercituum est Pastor ovium.* Wouldst thou understand his Tenderneſs over thee? He resembles himself to the tenderest Creatures. *As an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings: as an Eagle stirs up her Nest, flutters over her young, bears them on her wings: Quasi Perdix fovet filios, quasi Gallina congregat pullos, quasi Aquila provocat ad volandum*; saith St. Bernard. All sweet resemblances of his Tenderneſs over us.

II. He assumes to himself the most endearing Relations.

1. A Friend, that's a sweet Relation. Indeed Aristotle thinks it ridiculous to count God our Friend. Yet God stoops to that relation. *I have called you my Friends*, John xv. 15.

2. A Brother, that's a loving Relation. He vouchsafes us that reference, *He is not ashamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. ii. 11.

3. A Father, that's a Relation of much love: *I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons, and my Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 18.

4. An Husband, that's an affectionate Relation, *Isai. liv. 5.* *He that made thee, is thine Husband. I have married thee to my self in mercy and loving kindness.* Nay, because these Relations single, and apart, fall short, he combines many of them together, twists them into one, to make these Cords of love the stronger. *He that doth the will of my Father, he is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother. Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undeſiled.*

III. He takes to himself the most tender affection:

1. Love and goodneſs, that's a sweet affection: God is not only loving, but Love it self, *1 Joh. iv. 16.* *God is love.* He is *Amor per essentiam*, *ἀντὶς ἀγαπᾶν*, not by a weak derivative participation.

2. Pity, that's a tender, melting affection. *The Lord is very pitiful*, Jam. v. 11.

3. Compassion and fellow-feeling of sorrows: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, *Isai. lxiii. 9.* His Nature is *impassibilis*, but not *incompassibilis*; free from passion; but full of compassion; and his compassion, 'tis in the proper seat of compassion. *He hath bowels of Compassion.* The Prophets tell of the yearnings, and rollings, and sounding of his bowels towards us.

We have done with the Argument, or Proposition of the Similitude: Now follows the

Second thing, the Conclusion, or Application of it: *Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

And in it are three things considerable:

Ee 2

First,

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First, The Donor and Benefactor, *Your heavenly Father.*

Secondly, The Gift to be bestowed, *The Holy Spirit.*

Thirdly, The Persons to whom he is promised, they are such as ask him.

First, The Donor, *Your heavenly Father.* And take notice of him in his double Relation.

I. Is that more Mysterious Relation *ad intra*, God the Father, the first Person in the glorious Trinity.

II. That more gracious Relation *ad extra*, with reference to us, as he is our Father.

The first of these will give aim for direction, of whom we must ask it.

The second will give an hint of encouragement and hope, that we shall obtain it.

The first, as a Finger, points out to him.

The second, as an Hand, beckens us to him.

I. God the Father, of him we must seek it. We had need to be set right in this point. We neither know what, or of whom to ask. *Who will shew us any good?* there are the ravings of our unguided wishes. Nay, to ask Grace, or Vertue from God, the Heathen Philosopher thought it ridiculous. *Virtutem nemo unquam accepit Deo retulit*, saith *Cotta* in *Tully*. Nay, *St. James* tells us, that even Christians themselves are subject to mistake, *Err not, my dear Brethren; every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of Light. Lux, a primo lucido*, of him we must crave it.

Not but that the two other sacred Persons concur in this work. The Holy Ghost is called *The Spirit of the Son*, Gal. iv. 6. *If any have not this spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. *Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace*. And this he dispenseth *arbitrio*, & *non obsequio*, saith the Father, not instrumentally, but by his own Authority. This was signified by that outward Type and Ceremony which Christ used in giving the Spirit, Joh. xx. 22. *He breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost. Spiratio is ab intra*, it shewed the Spirit proceeded from him. This gift of Grace comes too from the third Person of the Holy Trinity. He is both the gift, and the giver also. *All these worketh that one, and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, as he will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. He is *divisus & distributus* himself divides and distributes, and 'tis *ad arbitrium*, saith *Chrysostom*, *ut dicitur* as he will, not as he is enjoined. *It breaths where it lists*, Joh. iii. 8. The Holy Ghost inspired his gifts, saith *St. Basil*, *et dicitur*, by the sovereign authority, not ministerially.

And yet this gift of the Spirit is ascribed to the Father by most special appropriation. He is called, *The Spirit of the Father*, Joh. xv. 26. *The Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father*. The gift of this day, called *the promise of the Father*, Luke xxiv. 49. both in procession, and in mission; his being, and his asending, cometh both from the Father. The Reason is good, *Pater est fons Deitatis*, he is the fountain and original of the Deity; he communicates it to the Son, and Spirit. Thus Divines compare the Father to the Fountain, from whence the Water springs; the Son to the River and Stream, that flows from this Fountain; the Holy Ghost to the Pool, or Sea, into which both Fountain and River do both run: all one in substance, yet distinctly apprehended by these several notions. Indeed they all concur in this work of grace, Eph. ii. 18. *Through the Son we have access by one Spirit to the Father*. The Son recommends us, the Spirit conducts us, and the Father receives us.

We have seen him in his first relation, *ad intra*; that was as a Finger to point out and direct us. Look upon him,

II. In his other relation *ad extra*; as he is our Father that's an Hand, that beckens and invites us. These three words, *Your heavenly Father*, afford us three hints of hope, three grounds of encouragement in the address of our Prayers:

1. That's one encouragement, *quod Pater*, that he is a Father. 'Tis *terminus bonitatis*. They that have Children, are of more compassion than those that have none. A good Argument of his prosperity and inclination to help us.

2. *Quod Cælestis*, that's another encouragement, he is an *Heavenly Father*. That's *termi-*

terminus potentiae; it argues his power and ability, that he can help and supply us. *Serm. I.*

3. *Quod Vester*; he is *Your Heavenly Father*. We are not forlorn, he doth not cast us off and abandon us, but own us for his children. That's a term of engagement, it gives us interest in his goodness and power: we may in an humble confidence lay claim to them.

And these three may answer, and satisfy three doubts, that a weak Faith may forecast it self in praying.

(1.) The first doubt is, *Domine, si vis*. Mar. i. 40. LORD, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. Never doubt of that, here is good hope of his goodness, he hath the heart and affection of a loving Father.

(2.) A second doubt is, *Domine, si potes*. Mar. ix. 22. LORD, if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on me. Never question that; he is an *Heavenly Father*, God all-sufficient to help and relieve us.

(3.) A third doubt is, *Domine, nonne tibi curæ*? Mar. iv. 38. LORD, carest thou not, that we perish? No, that's answered and satisfied, *He is your heavenly Father*, his goodness and his greatness are both assured to us for our good and benefit.

Without these encouragements, Infidelity would make us give over our Prayers, either denying his will, with those in *Zephany*, *The LORD will neither do good, nor evil*; or denying his power, with the *Prince of Samaria*, *If the windows of Heaven were open, he cannot succour us*; or, with *Cain*, disclaiming our interest in him, *I am cast out from his face*, he will not own us: But all these put together, he is willing, he is able, he is engaged to do it: By these three immutable things, in which 'tis impossible that God should fail, we may have an assured hope and strong consolation.

Well then, this hope we have in the Power: Come we,

Secondly, To the gift to be bestowed, that's very suitable to the Authour, and Donor, the *Holy Spirit*. St. *Matthew*, expresses it in more general terms, Chap. vii. 11. *Your Father in Heaven shall give good things to them that ask him*; that's provision of a larger extent, that supplies all our necessities, satisfies all our desires and cravings. But yet St. *Luke* here overlooks the rest, insists upon this one gift, that which *Parisenfis* calls *Maximam Eleemosynam immensæ misericordiæ*, the choice gift of God's bounty, his grace and Spirit. And purposely and sweetly are our prayers here limited to the gift of the Holy Ghost.

That which a child should ask of his Father, should have one of these three conditions, and they are all eminently in this great gift.

I. It should be *necessarium*: A child should ask of his Father that which is necessary. Superfluities are not for a Child to ask, nor will a wise Father give them. *Superflua non nocent*, say the Lawyers in making Conveyances; but in our Prayers and Petitions, they may prove offensive. Now of all the gifts that we can ask, or God can give, the *Holy Spirit* is of greatest necessity. Christ tells us, that in the Similitude, children ask for bread. Bread is not so necessary for this life, as grace for Salvation. You heard often of *Non in solo pane*; bread is not the only staff we lean on. But there is no such exception of grace and Sanctity. Nay, the necessities of life are but impertinencies in compare with that *One thing necessary*, the grace of God's Spirit: We may say of all other disappointments, as that Roman did, *Si non, ego sum*; and resolve with our selves to make shift without them: but fall short of this gift, and we are undone for ever.

If a child crave beyond necessity, yet that which he asks, it must be *utile*, that which is good and profitable to him. Now this gift of the Spirit, 'tis profitable to all things, most useful and beneficial.

1. 'Tis *in se bonum*, the best, the most precious gift, that Heaven can bestow. One grace, one holy inspiration, the least good motion, one sigh, or groan to God-ward, is of an higher price, more to be valued, than the whole World beside.

2. *Facit bonum*. Grace, 'tis such a gift, as always makes him good that hath it. *Aristotle* tells us, that *Virtute nemo male utitur*. That's truly good, that cannot be abused. And 'tis one of his Topicks, *Quæ sunt melioribus propria, videntur esse meliora*. Grace, 'tis the good man's portion, and it makes him good. But temporal things are not of that virtue; a man may have those goods, and not be good himself.

Riches

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Riches are called Goods, saith *Augustine*, *Non quòd inde sis bonus, sed quòd inde facias bonum*, but the Holy Ghost ever makes them good that have it.

3. This gift, 'tis *fundamentum reliquorum*: 'Tis the pledge and assurance of all other gifts. And so it takes in St. Mathew's expression. *Chrysostom* calls it *ἀρχαῖον, ὑπόμνητον τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου*; 'tis the earnest for all other gifts and blessings. The things of this life are accessaries and appurtenances to this great gift; but as the Paper and Pack-thread, that's given into the Bargain. *The Lord will give grace and glory*, saith *David*, *Psal. lxxxiv. 11.* and other things are but an *& cætera*. No good thing will be with-hold. He that gives thee his Son and Spirit, will deny thee nothing.

That's a second, it must be good and profitable.

III. A child should ask his Father that which is *Maximum testimonium amoris Paterni*, that which is the surest sign of his Father's love. Love, in all gifts, it looks at love, and that's the best gift, that doth best betoken it. Now, above all other gifts, this gift of the Spirit, 'tis the surest sign, the richest evidence, the strongest demonstration of God's Love to us. *The Love of God is shed into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us*, *Rom. v. 5.* The greatest gift that Love can give, is to give himself. Now, in giving his Spirit, he gives himself to us, makes us partakers of the divine Nature, saith St. Peter; *ὁ κολλώμενος τῷ Κυρίῳ, ἐν πνεύματι ἐστίν.* it joyns us to the Lord, and makes us one with him.

Other Petitions may be made on by-respects, and may speed accordingly; but this for the Spirit is grounded on Love. *Nihil Domine, præter te ipsum*, that's Love's Petition. No man prays for the Spirit, but he loves God; and no man receives the Spirit, but God loves him. Oh! these Prayers for Grace; *Pardon my sins, LORD, purge out my corruptions, subdue my Rebellions, quicken my Devotions*; *Domine, quas tuorum preces exaudis, si has non exaudis*; Aug. These Prayers shall speed, though others may fail. The grant of these, 'tis *Occultæ prædestinationis indicium, futura felicitatis præsagium*, saith *Bernard*. They are the tokens of our eternal election, fore-tokens of our future glorification.

To this purpose Divines express this communication of the Holy Ghost under three names:

1. He is *Amor patris*.

2. He is *Donum Patris*.

3. He is *Osculum Patris*.

} Three sweet Insinuations of his good will towards us.

1. He is *The Love of the Father*, in his eternal purposes, and preparations of Grace.

2. He is *The Gift of the Father*, in his holy inspirations and infusions of Grace.

3. He is *The Kiss of the Father*, in those unspeakable comforts and consolations of Grace. In bestowing of him on us, He deals with us, as the loving Father did with his returning Prodigal; not only receives us, but kisses us; not onely cloaths us, but adorns us; not only feeds us, but feasts us; the Kiss, the Ring, the rich Robe, and the finest of fat things, all bestowed upon us in this gift of the Spirit, Whatsoever belongs to life and godliness.

There is yet a third Particular.

Thirdly, The Persons upon whom this gift is bestowed, 'tis upon those that ask him.

The Correspondency with the Similitude would have been more express, had it run thus; *He will give the Holy Ghost unto his Children*: But yet our Saviour frames the reddition in these Terms rather, 'tis to them that ask him.

I. This expression, 'tis equivalent; 'tis a true and certain description of a Child of God; he is one that prays to him. Devotion, 'tis *indoles & ingenium Filii Dei*. The Spirit of Adoption is the Spirit of Devotion; first vents it self in Prayer and Petition, makes us cry, *Abba, Father*. If the new born child do but cry, 'tis *partus vitalis*, the Inheritance belongs to him.

II. And then this clause, 'tis a necessary Condition. This gift, 'tis not *inter misilia Fortunæ*, it's no Chance gift; it must be sought for. In other blessings he oft-times kisses us sleeping; but the gifts of grace are given *vigilantibus, & non dormientibus*; no man enjoys them, but he knows how he comes by them.

But

But then the Question will be, *How can we pray for the Spirit, without the Spirit?* He that prays, must pray *by the Spirit*, else 'tis no prayer. No man can pray, or so much as say, *that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*. The first thirstings after Grace, St. Augustine calls it *sitientis fidei donum*. Hungering and thirsting, 'tis a gift of Grace. Emptiness is one thing, and Appetite another. 'Twas not the least branch of the Pelagian Heresie, "That our Prayers must prevent the gifts of Grace, and that God expects them before he bestows his Grace upon us. No, saith *Concilium Arausicanum*, *Per invocationem gratia non confertur, sed ipsa gratia facit, ut invocetur*. Thou wilt prepare their heart, Psal. x. 17. 'Tis the Spirit that first begets our Prayer, 'tis not our Prayer that procures the Spirit. Our Prayer is first *desiderium ex dono*, and then the Spirit is *donum ex desiderio*. Our access to God by Prayer, St. Chrysostom observes, is called by Paul, *ὡς ἐκείνου, ἀλλὰ προεταγμένη*, *not a motion of our selves, but as moved by him, ὡς ἐκ αὐτοῦ προεέλθοντες, ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτῷ προσήχθημεν*. Prayer, 'tis the breathing of God's Spirit within us; now, in breathing, inspiration, and drawing in of breath, is before expiration, or sending it out. No man prays for the Spirit, but he hath the Spirit. *Nullum certius testimonium gratiae, quam desiderium gratiae*, saith St. Bernard. The desires of Grace, are sure signs of Grace. As the Rivers, by secret passages, come first from the Sea, then by more open conveyances return thither again.

St. Augustine resolves it, *Fides, & non petita, conceditur, ut ei petenti alia concedantur*. The first motions of Grace prevent our wills, and beget our Prayers; but the after-supplies of Grace are obtained by Prayer. Preventing Grace, 'tis the root of Prayer, but subsequent Grace, is the fruit of Prayer. In the first gift of Grace, he bids himself to us, as he did to *Zacheus*; but for after-accessions of Grace, he looks to be invited, ere he comes unto us. *In prima conversione*, He knocks at our doors; in subsequent Grace by Prayer, we knock at his door. *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Satisfie my soul in drougt, that my soul may be as a watered Garden. O turn in my Lord, turn in to me*. In our first conversion, we are like the child in the womb, nourished by the Navel, not by the Mouth; but afterwards, like new-born Babes, we must crave and desire our spiritual nourishment, that we may grow by it. Our Saviour expresseth it in two Similitudes, *Mat. xiii.* in the 44. Verse, there Grace is *Theſaurus inventus*, 'tis like a *Treasure*, that a man found in the field, when he little thought of it. But then Verse 45. Grace is *Margarita quaesita*, 'tis as a Merchant, that searches for precious Pearls, it costs him much pains and travel, ere he can obtain it. *Peto, ut accipiam, & cum accepero, rursus peto; quanto plus bibero, tanto plus sitio*, saith St. Hierom. Like *Achab's* Prayer to her Father *Caleb*, *Terram siccam dedisti mihi, des scaturigines aquarum*. The thirstings for Grace thou hast given me, give me also the springs of Grace and refreshings.

The

Third, and last thing remains, that's the strength of the Illation, and in it the proportion of the Similitude, *Quanto magis, How much more?* 'Tis a proportion with advantage.

First, It had been well, if the Argument had held, though with some abatement, *à majore ad minus*; if any, the least similitude of a Father's love were in God to usward; if but a spark of that affection to such unworthy children of so high a Father; we not worthy, he should own us for Children; the place of servants, and the bread of servants, 'tis too good for us.

Secondly, Or had the Argument held *à pari*, did he bear but so much love to us, as Parents to their children. *David* sets it that proportion, and took comfort in it, *Psal. ciii. 13. Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*. No, this Scripture offers us more Grace. Christ frames the Argument, *à minore ad majus*; *Quanto magis, How much more?* His love rises here to the high-water-mark, like the swellings of *Jordan*, when it overflows the Banks. Here is full measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, beyond all comparison. To the Exuberancy of it in these Particulars.

1. In God there is *Certior notitia*; that's one exuberancy. If you that be Fathers, know what's good for your Children, *Quanto magis? How much more* doth the most

Serm. I. most wise God know what is good for us? Earthly Fathers, though never so circumspect and provident, yet may be mistaken, they may give *pro Pane Lapidem, pro Pisce Serpentem*; hurt their children, when they mean to help them; blind Isaac may be mistaken; old Samuel dispose of Sons in Places unfit for them; the Mother of Zebedee's children may ask she knows not what for them; but our heavenly Father perfectly knows what makes for our welfare. He always hears us *ad utilitatem*. The Church acknowledges this in her Prayers, *God, whose Providence is never deceived, put away from us all hurtfull things*. He knows how to order all evils and casualties for our best advantage.

2. In God there is *plenior sufficientia*, that's a second Exuberancy; He is infinitely more able to supply our necessities. You men are poor, empty, unsufficient Creatures; all your store, 'tis but borrowed bread, *Verse 5*. The Cruse of Oyl may fail; your handful of Meal may be spent. *The children asked for bread, and there was none to give them*, Lam. iv. 4. Nay, the great Master of the Household may be at that exigent, as not to be able to relieve. *If the Lord do not help, how shall I help? out of the Barn-floor, or out of the Wine-press*, 2 Kings vi. 27. said the King himself. But in our heavenly Father's House there is bread enough; he hath abundance of Spirit; the opening his hand fills all with plenty.

3. In God there is *copiosior bonitas*, that's a third Exuberancy; he is far more bountiful and gracious: *Vos mali, & maligni*; you men, ye are ill, and ill-natur'd, the best of you, in compare with him. Even to your children ye oft give grudgingly. *He gives to all men liberally, and upbraides not*, Jam. i. 5. *Honor fontis est magnitudo emanationis*, saith *Paristenfis*: *The plenty and fulness of the stream commends the fountain*. All that goodness which is in men, 'tis but a drop to that Fountain, or Ocean, but as a dust of sand to the whole globe of the earth, as a spark to the whole Element of Fire. Your poor bounty is but the dust of the ballance, the drop of the bucket, whereas he is good to all Creatures; *The whole World is full of his goodness*.

4. In God there is *autior paternitas*, that's a fourth Exuberancy. *Vile bodies*, saith *Paul*, that's all we have from our earthly Parents; *precious souls*, saith *Solomon*, those we receive from the *Father of Spirits*. In respect of our bodies, we may say to *Corruption*, *Thou art my Father*, and to the *Worm*, *Thou art my Mother*: but our souls, they are Sparks of Eternity. You men are but secondary, half-fathers, fathers of the flesh to your Children; he is the Father of Spirits. Here is our chief pedigree and descent; *ὁ πατὴρ τῶν θεῶν πατὴρ*, as *Nyssen* calls it; that puts a *Quantò magis* upon God's Paternity. Nay, your children, even when they are yours, are even in that more his than yours. He claims them for his own, *Ezek. xxiii. 37*. *Thou hast taken thy Sons, whom thou hast born unto me. Servi, non sibi, sed Domino generant*; the children of the *bond-servant* are the Master's right. We are born and brought up upon his knees. When ye commend the care of your children to God, you think you do it to a Friend, when 'tis done to a Father; like *Pharaoh's daughter*, she little thought to put *Moses* to Nurse to his own Mother. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*; so said He who had not only the breasts of a Nurse, but the bowels of a Mother. In respect of him, *call no man Father*; he is *our Father*, both *in fieri, & in esse*, gives us our being, and continues it to us. *Thou art our Father, Abraham hath forgot us, Israel knows us not*, *Isai. lxiii. 16*.

5. In God there is *fortior affectio*, that's a fifth Exuberancy. The love of a Father to his child is but weak, and cold, compared with that love which God bears to us. There is *εὐνοχρεία σπληγγῶν*, *straightness of bowels*, even in the best of you. A Father, nay a Mother, may forget her child; but his love to us is everlasting. *Tam Pater nemo, tam Pius nemo*. Earthly Parents beget their children; and then they love them; but God loves his children, and therefore he begets them. His love, 'tis the Principle of our being his children. *Out of his own good will he begat us*, saith *St. James*. We had a being in his love, before we had it in our selves. But love in other Parents, 'tis but an after-consequent of our Generation.

To close up all,

This *Quantò magis* on God's part it should be mutual and reciprocal. In all rea-
son

son and equity it exacts the like proportion in us to him-ward. If you, that be children, stand so, and so affected to your earthly Parents: *Quantò magis?* how much more should the source and strength of our affections be carried to our heavenly Father? We must not receive with one measure, and make our returns to him with another; as if a *quantò magis* on his part should beget a *tanto minus* on ours; the more abundantly he loves, the less he should be beloved of us.

(1.) It must set a proportion to our Faith and Confidence. If you that are children, will rely upon your Parents, *quantò magis*, how much more should we disburthen our cares upon our heavenly Father? Ask no question, *What shall we eat?* and *What shall we drink?* or *what shall we put on?* for he cares for us. Other Creatures, they share in his Providence; his special Care, 'tis his Childrens Portion. *Curam sibi Ecclesia vendicat*. His children should not trust to common Providence; but to his special Promises, and rest upon them.

(2.) It must set a proportion to our Fear and Reverence. If you that be children, observe and reverence your earthly Parents, *quantò magis*, how much more reverence should we perform to our heavenly Father? *Filio semper honesta, & sancta persona Patris videri debet*. Let the man be what he will be, the name of a Father to his Child is venerable and awful. How dear and dreadful to us should be that glorious name of our heavenly Father.

(3.) It must set a proportion to our Love and Thankfulness. If you that be children, be lovingly and gratefully affected to your Parents: with what bonds of Love, *quantò magis*, with what ties of thankfulness should our hearts be knit to our heavenly Father? Favours from men, they are but *scintillæ ignis*, poor sparks of fire; but the Love of God is *mons igneus*, an huge mountain of Fire to enflame our love to him. Those cold complexioned Creatures, that are daily encompassed with these flames of his love, and not affected with them, they are *Salamandræ Diabolicæ*, saith *Parisiensis*, devilish and infernal Salamanders, that live in the midst of these flames of his Love, and are not warmed by them. St Paul calls this proportionable return of Love and thankfulness, *arquitudo*, a just recompense, 2 Cor. vi. 11. And his exhortation to it shall be our conclusion; O ye Corinthians, saith he (we will take a larger compass) O ye Sons of men, the Heart of our Heavenly Father is enlarged toward us; we are not straitned in him, but in our own bowels. Now as a recompence in the same, I speak as unto children, be ye also enlarged. "That so approving our selves his children here in the Regeneration, we may be acknowledged for such by him at the Resurrection; and be made partakers of that Inheritance, of his faithful, his obedient, his loving, and thankful children, which God the Father hath prepared, God the Son hath purchased, and God the Holy Ghost hath revealed, and assured, and sealed up to us.

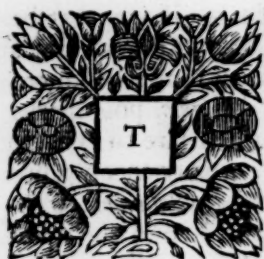
To which three glorious Persons, but one most gracious, most wise, and immortal God, be given by us, and the whole Church, and by all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, all possible praise and thanksgiving, and adoration, from this time forth, and for evermore. Amen.

O N WHIT-SUNDAY.

The Second Sermon.

St. JOHN xiv. 15, 16.

*If ye love me, keep my Commandments:
And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,
that he may abide with you for ever.*



THE Chapter, 'tis an Administration of Comfort against a present sorrow that befell the Apostles. Our Saviour had forewarned them of his leaving the World, and departing from them. The loss of his presence did much perplex them; that *the light of their eyes, the breath of their nostrils, the joy of their hearts*, must be taken from them, could not but be grievous to them; *their hearts were troubled at it*, Verse 1. Our Saviour, to ease, and cheer up their drooping spirits, affords them a plentiful comfort against this sorrow, by assuring them a threefold supply of his bodily presence.

I. The first is the supply of Faith, Verse 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*: as if he had said; "All that comfort which my bodily presence affords to you, Faith in me, when I am gone from you, shall supply to you. From a true Believer Christ is not absent, but always present to him. *Faith, 'tis the evidence of things not seen*. But from an unbelieving man Christ is absent, even when he is present. *The light shined in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not*; but Faith presents him to the Soul of a Christian, even when he is absent. The multitude may throng him; but 'tis only Faith that toucheth him. It enters into Heaven, and there converses with him. As an Optick-glass makes remote things seem present to us: so Faith's Prospective looks up into heaven, and there he holds, and enjoys our Saviour; *in whom, though you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

II. A second Supply, that Christ directs them to, is the supply of Prayer, Verse 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, I will do it for you*: Christ, being present with them, made a supply to all their wants: and now, that he leaves them, he gives them this assurance, that all the comforts they had in his presence, their prayers unto him shall obtain from him. Prayer, 'tis *ascensus mentis ad Deum*. By it, the soul of a devout Christian ascends up into Heaven. Wouldest thou converse with thy Saviour? *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend up into Heaven to bring him down to me?* but betake thy self to thy Prayer, and thou art in Heaven. That gives us access to the throne of grace, affords us a sweet communion with our blessed Saviour.

III. A third supply, which our Saviour assures them of, is a supply of the Spirit; *the Holy Ghost shall be shed upon them*; and the comforts which he brings with him shall sweeten their present sorrow, overcome their grief, and make them forget it. *The Holy Ghost, saith Tertullian, 'tis Vicarius Christi*, He is in the Church instead of Christ. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, saith Saint Paul. But he that hath the Spirit of Christ, he is Christs, and Christ is his.

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to *Christ*: as the head and the feet, though seemingly distant, are all one body, because they are enlivened with the same soul. And, Serm. II.

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The Text then, 'tis a gracious Promise which Christ makes to his Church, of his bestowing upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost. The first evident performance of which Promise was as on this Day accomplished. Surely, an *exceeding great and precious promise* it is, as Saint Peter calls it; and accordingly our Saviour makes it unto them with some solemnity. This Promise, 'tis here convey'd unto them by way of Compact, and Covenant. And, as all Covenants, so this here stands upon two parts:

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First, He requires an obedient Love.

Secondly, He requires a loving Obedience.

Here is both a Load-stone, and a Touch-stone.

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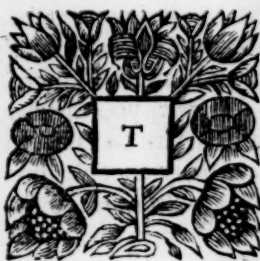
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Serm. II.

1. It must be *amor ex officio*, a dutiful love to Christ, such a love as an Inferiour bears to a Superiour, to him that hath power to command him; so to love him, as that we reverence and honour him, and stand in awe of him. The love we must bear to Christ, is not a love of familiarity, as some would have it; Oh, because he loves us, and we love him, therefore lay aside all reverence, shake him by the hand, not bow the knee to him. Christ indeed hath vouchsafed to make us his brethren, but yet he retains the priviledge of birth-right to himself. And what that is, we may see Gen. xxvii. 29. *Be Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mother's Sons bow down to thee.* That's the first, 'tis Love *ex officio*, an officious and dutiful Love, a love with reverence, a love of him that is our Commander.

2. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*; it must be *amor ex præscripto*, that's a second condition. We must testifie our love to him, not by tending to him our own inventions, but by a careful performance of his holy prescriptions. The most voluntary services of our love in Vows, and Freewill-Offerings, though they be left to our choice for the act and exercise, yet are they prescribed to us for their kind and quality. If thou wilt vow any service to thy God, thou must not, like *Jephtha*, do it at all adventures, any thing that comes next to hand; but it must be such a service, as he hath testified will be accepted of him. *Id utique Deo dignum, quod ipse sibi fatetur acceptum.* Otherwise, invent thy work, and seek thy wages. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what the LORD requires,* and wherein thou mayest make proof of thy love to him; 'tis not by obtruding thine own devices, but by an obsequious observing his holy Prescriptions. That's the second; 'tis *amor ex præscripto*.

3. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*; 'tis *amor in praxi*: that's a third condition of our Love, it must be a practick, and operative, and a working Love. Neither the affection of love in the heart, nor the profession of love in the tongue; but the deeds of love; *the labour of love*, as St. Paul calls it, is that kind of Love which Christ sets much by. There are some sweet enjoyments of Love, which a Christian, whose heart is seasoned with the Love of Christ, doth exceedingly delight in, and God doth oft-times afford them to us; but these are rather *præmia* than *officia*, rewards of Love, rather than duties of Love; encouragements of Love, rather than the employments of Love; Christ more requires the works of our hands, than the embracings of our arms. *Probatio dilectionis est exhibitio operis*; Greg. He is the best servant, not that always stands in his Masters presence; but he, that diligently minds his Master's business. Not waiters, but workers, are the best servants.

That's the first consideration of the Words, as they are a Supposition.

II. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*; Look upon this speech in the aim and intent of it; so 'tis a direction, a rectifying of their Love, and setting of it in a right way. The Disciples hearing that Christ was to leave them, were exceedingly grieved at it; and they thought they could not better make known their love to him, than by desiring him to be always with them, still to enjoy his bodily presence; Christ rejects not their love, but yet he rectifies it; shews them the error of their love, and how they misplaced it. *Diligebant dulciter, sed non prudenter*, saith Bernard. 'Twas an affectionate Love, but inconsiderate. He accepts their affection, but redresses their error; approves the piety, but redresses the carnality of their Love to him. As Saint Paul speaks, *he shews them a more excellent way*, how they should testifie their love to him. Thus, Verse 28. he gives their Love a gentle check and reproof: *If ye love me*, saith Christ, *ye would rejoyce, because I go to the Father*, and not be sorrowful for parting with me. It was thus with St. Peter; he thought he loved and honoured our Saviour, when we would strain courtesie with Christ, not let Christ to wash his feet: *Master, thou shalt never wash my feet*; Christ dislikes not his Love, but shews him his Error, *If I wash not thy feet, thou shalt have no part with me.* So Mary Magdalen expressed her love and joy to our Saviour, by fastning about his feet after his Resurrection; Christ corrects that error of her Love, bids her forbear those embracements; *Touch me not, but go to my Disciples*, and tell them the joyful Tidings of my Resurrection.

Our

Our humane passionate affections to Christ are no good proofs of our Love to him. Our Spiritual devotion, our Christian conversation, our Dutiful obedience to what he commands, these are the right expressions of our Love to him. To these he directs us. Serm. II.

III. *If ye love me* — It points out the Kind, and just Qualification of our Obedience, it must be an Obedience, that springs from our love to him. 'Tis love that breeds true, and Christian obedience. It will add three graceful qualities to our Obedience:

1. It will make it pleasing, and acceptable Obedience.
2. It will make it willing, easie, and chearful Obedience.
3. It will make it lasting, and constant Obedience.

1. Obedience arising from Love, 'tis the only pleasing, and acceptable Obedience. God is a gracious Sovereign, and so will be served as loving Subjects serve their natural Prince, and not as Slaves and Bond-men do an usurping Tyrant. All other Motives but Love, are servile and base, and so beget in us the drudgery of a Slave, not the Duty of a Son.

1. Forbearance from sin, it must be out of the Love of God, or 'tis not accepted: *Tunc vitia vitia deputantur, cum Dei amore vincuntur*; Aug. Then sin is truly mortified, when the Love of God doth mortifie it in us. Fear, that would avoid punishment; but Love is careful to avoid offending. He that fears only, *timet ne pereat*, is afraid of smarting; but he that loves God, *timet ne displiceat*, is afraid of offending.

2. Performance of good, that must also be out of the Love of God, or 'tis not accepted: *Tunc bonum bene fit, cum dulcescere incipit*. That's acceptable Obedience, when the sweetness of Love draws unto it, not when we are driven to it by the terrours of Fear. He that doth good out of fear of punishment only, would not do it, if he could escape the punishment he fears. Such Obedience arises out of Self-love, not from the Love of God, and so God accepts it not.

2. This Love of God makes our Obedience, an easie, and chearful, and ready Obedience; and such Obedience it is, that God delights in. 'Tis David's description of an holy man, *Psal. i. 2. His delight is in the Law of God*: More than so, *he delights greatly in his Commandments*, *Psal. cxii. 1. Αγαπών ἐστὶν ἐντολάς*, saith Aristotle. Unwillingness breeds painfulness. *Totum durum est, quicquid imperatur invito*; *Salvian*. An unwilling mind accounts every command of God burthensome; but Love esteems every Duty light and easie. 'Tis a shame to talk of hardness and difficulty. The service Jacob underwent for Rachel, 'twas a long, and a laborious service; he endured the heat of the day, the cold and frost of the night, and that for seven years continuance: yet it seemed but as a few days, because he loved her, *Gen. xxix. 20. This is the love of God* (saith St. John) *that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous*, *1 Joh. v. 3. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my heart*, *Psal. xl. 8*.

3. This Love of God will make our Obedience a lasting, and constant Obedience. When we come to this pitch of Piety, to serve God without servile fear, then we shall serve him all the days of our life, saith holy Zachary. Loving Obedience, 'tis lasting Obedience. The Servant that saith, *I love my Master*, will never go from him; he will have his ear bored, and will continue a servant for ever, *Exod. xxi. 5, 6*. But fear, 'tis a flincher, and will soon start aside; it will make us cry out, like those in *Malachy*, *O what a weariness it is to serve the Lord! Tully* saith truly, *Metus haud diuturni officii Magister*. Service out of fear only, 'tis not long-lived. But love abides for ever, in this sense also. And the reason of it is, because love breeds delight; and delight, 'tis the true liberty of the soul; what a man doth freely, he can do constantly. When a man is not restrained from what he would do, nor constrained to do what he would not do, but from a delightful disposition abhors that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good, that man's Obedience will hold out constantly.

That's the third thing, *If ye love me*; 'tis a Qualification.

IV. *If ye love me*; look to the strength of this Speech, and so 'tis an Obtestation, a form of earnest and importunate entreaty, And that shews,

1. The

Serm. II.

1. The Efficacy of this motive.

2. The earnest affection of him that uses it.

3. The weightiness of the Work to which he perswades us.

1. The efficacy of this Motive, *If ye love me*; 'tis the most prevailing Motive to an ingenuous Nature. *Nihil est imperiosius charitate*, saith St. Hierom. Love, it's a most imperious Commander. Nothing hath that dominion over the Soul, that Love hath. Oh! *the love of Christ constrains us*, saith St. Paul, 2 Cor. v. 14. It made him stick at nothing, that might testify his love to Christ. Upon this Motive Christ commends the care of his Church to Peter; *Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than this? Feed my sheep*. 'Twas the Motive that prevailed with Samson to disclose himself to Dalilah, though it were to his own hurt and prejudice; *How canst thou say that thou lovest me, and dost not tell me?* That Speech pierced his heart, and he confessed all to her, Judg. xvi. 15, 16.

2. This Obtestation, *If ye love me*, it shews the earnest affection of him that uses it. 'Tis an usual term of speech among men, when we crave some good to our selves, then we can woo, and solicit with this perswasion, *If ye love me, do this thing for me*. But the thing Christ here perswades to by this earnest entreaty, is no way beneficial to him, but only to our selves. He stands not in need of our obedience. That God will use our service, 'tis *indulgentia*, saith Bernard, not *indigentia*; a meer vouchsafing of favour to us. As Augustine alludes to those words of the Psalmist, *My goods are nothing unto thee*; tells us, God is the only true Lord and Master; because we need him, but he needs not us. Other Masters need their Servants, as well as Servants need their Masters. We cannot take up those words of defiance, *I have no need of thee*; but God stands in no need of our obedience. Whereas Christ saith therefore, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, 'tis all one as if he had said, *If ye love me, love your own souls*. St. Hierom tells us, God therefore commands us, *ut causas habeat remunerandi*, that so he may have occasion to bless us, and to do good to us; otherwise he hath no need of our service. When God entertained Abraham into his service, and covenanted with him; first, he tells him, *I am God All-sufficient*: God had no need of Abraham; but Abraham he stood in need of God. Like some charitable man, that will study to find out some way to set the poor on work, that so he might relieve them. How graceless a thing will it be in us, saith St. Hierom, *Ejus reniti voluntati, cujus imperium beneficium est?* to disobey that God, whose Commands are favours, and all his Injunctions like the Directions of a Friend, or the Prescripts of a Physician for our health and happiness?

3. This Obtestation, *If ye love me*, it shews *pondus officii*, the great weight and importance of this our Obedience. When we lay this load upon our entreaties, *If ye love me*, we imply, the thing we sue for is a matter of moment. Such is our obedience to God's Commandments; to which Christ adjures us by our love to him; otherwise he would not so deeply charge us by so strong an engagement. Surely the feeding of Christ's sheep was no slight business, that might be done, or left undone, when Christ urges Peter to it, by this Adjuration, *If thou lovest me*. We may talk of our loving of Christ, but Christ accounts us *his Friends* upon no other terms; *Ie are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you*, Joh. xv. 14. *Idem velle, & idem nolle, ea demum amicitia est*. Conformity in will is the truest amity. Saul, he would commute his Obedience into a Sacrifice, what saith Samuel? *Obedience, 'tis better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, is better than the fat of rams*. Christ shews us the equity of this his demand of us, John xv. 10. *If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love*. He puts no other task upon us, than what he underwent himself. Sure, it becomes the Servant to be as obedient as the Son and Heir was.

We have seen the Motive to Obedience, Love: Now come to consider,

Secondly, The Duty to which he moves them, and that's the *keeping of his Commandments*. And here, for understanding of this, we will make two Enquiries.

I. *Quæ necessitas?* What's the Necessity of this Duty? why need we perform it?

II. *Quæ*

II. *Quæ possibilitas?* What is the possibility of this Duty? how can we perform it? Serm. II.

I. *Quæ necessitas?* What necessity is there of the Duty? Nay, we are made to enquire by some men, how this can stand with the state of Christianity, as if that did discharge us from obedience to the Law. No, verily; Christianity 'tis no exemption from any moral Duty. Christ is not only a Saviour, but a Law-giver: He brings salvation, and he requires obedience. St. Paul is express against this licentious Doctrine, that *Christians are freed from the Law of God*: Rom. iii. 31. *Do we make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the Law.* St. Augustine makes a circular connexion 'twixt the Law and the Gospel: *Lex adducit ad fidem*, the Law, that sends us to Faith; *Fides fundit orationem*, Faith, that begets Prayer: *Oratio impetrat Spiritum*, Prayer, that obtains the Spirit: *Spiritus inspirat charitatem*, the Spirit inspires Love into us: & *charitas implet legem*, Love, that's the fulfilling of the Law. Tertullian resolves this point excellently: *Libertas in Christo, non facit innocentiae injuriam, manet tota lex pietatis & sanctitatis, in qua lege beatus est qui meditatur die ac nocte*. Christian liberty doth not free us from Moral Duty: the Law of Piety is still in full force, and blessed is the man that meditates therein day and night. The same Law of God doth still bind us, though not upon the same terms, that it doth bind those that are out of Christ.

II. *Quæ possibilitas?* That's a second Enquiry, what possibility is there for us to keep them? St. Paul tells us of τὸ ἀδύνατον ὧς νόμος. Rom. viii. the impossibility of the Law in respect of our inability to perform, and fulfil it. St. Peter tells us, the yoke of the Law 'twas insupportable, Act. xv. 10. I answer, the Law of God, in it self, is an heavy burthen; but yet an heavy burthen may be made tolerable two ways, and both of them are here in the Text.

1. Here is that in the Text that doth corroborate, and strengthen us, that's the love of Christ, that endues the soul with much strength. *In amore, aut non laboratur, aut labor ipse amatur*. Love never complains of labour. Love enables us to labour, to bear, to endure, to suffer; *it will bear all things, it will endure all things*, 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

2. Here is something in the Text that doth alleviate, and lighten this burthen of the Law, that's implied in this word, *Mea, My Commandments*. That's both a lightening and a sweetning word. The Law, as enjoined by Moses, 'tis insupportable; but, as Christ imposes it in the gracious equity of the Gospel, so 'tis a gentle yoke, an easie burthen; Christ abates the rigour, takes off the terrour of Moses his Law. *Let not God speak to us*; nay, let not Moses speak to us, *lest we die*: but let Christ speak to us. Thus Augustine prays, *Legem mihi constitue in Christo, Lex in Christo, est lex cum misericordia*: The Law from Sinai, that's a dreadful Law; but the Law from Sion, that's a gracious Law, when 'tis delivered to us in the hand of such a Mediatour as Christ is, with those gracious condescensions to our weakness, and merciful allowances of our imperfections, which the Gospel affords us. Though we cannot perform his commandments to a just satisfaction, yet we may perform them to a gracious acceptance. This made St. Paul say, *I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me*, Phil. iv. 13. Through Christ abating, and through Christ enabling, we may do all things.

We have seen the *Postulatum*, What Christ requires of us:

Come we now,

Secondly, To the Promissory part of the Text, what Christ assures us, he will do for us; *Ego rogabo*: and this is a gracious Motive to quicken our obedience.

I. He doth not *agere pro imperio*, enjoin us to keep his commandments upon the Law of Subjection, tells us what we are bound to do, bids us obey, urges our duty upon us, and saith no more. *Omnis dominus servo monosyllabus*. Masters use not perfwasions, or entreaties; but do, or not do, that's the Language of Authority: No, Christ's Injunction here, 'tis more gracious; not like Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship his new erected god: If you will fall down, and worship, well and good; but no promise made to their obedience: but if they will not worship, he threatens them Fire and Faggot, and the flaming Furnace. And indeed Penalties are the usual sanctions of mens Laws, not Hopes and Promises.

II. Christ

Serm. II.

II. Christ alledges not *Quid fecerit*; he tells them not what he hath already done for them, and so challenges their obedience by the Law of Gratitude, as a fruit of thankfulness for Mercies received; (as indeed, God is always before-hand with us in blessings, and may justly expect our thankful obedience for mercies received) but Christ tells them here, what he will do for them over and above; for the work of Servants they shall have the reward of Sons: *The Father will send the Spirit of his Son into their hearts*, to support and comfort them.

So then, the Promise that Christ made to them, is a gracious promise of comfort. And in it take notice of these four Particulars:

First, Here is the Procurer of this Blessing, that's Christ. *I'll pray for it.*

Secondly, Here is the Author and Donor of it, that's *God the Father*.

Thirdly, Here is the Blessing it self, that's *Another Comforter*.

Fourthly, Here is the Stability of this Blessing, *He shall abide with you for ever*.

Here we have the way discovered to us, to get comfort in all our Distresses.

I. Here is the Fountain, and Original of Comfort, that's *God the Father*.

II. Here is the Well-head of Comfort, that's *God the Holy Ghost*.

III. Here is He that draws up these Waters of Comfort out of this Well of Salvation; that's *God the Son*. The Well is deep; but *Oratio Christi*, 'tis *fitula gratiae*.

Here are three Comforters, not like *Job's* three Friends, that proved miserable comforters unto him; but all of them Authors of unspeakable comforts. Here is the Graece of Christ, the Love of the Father, the Communion of the Holy Ghost; all of them joyning to comfort his children.

First, The Procurer of this comfort is Christ, by his powerful prevailing Prayer, and Intercession. And this Promise of Christ, that by his Prayer, he will obtain this Blessing for us, 'tis divers ways considerable.

I. 'Tis *Ego rogabo, I will pray*, that you may receive the Spirit. He doth not say, *Ego rependam*, I will repay your Obedience to my Commandments with this Reward, due to your Obedience, that you shall receive what you have deserved. No, when we have performed our best obedience, yet here is all our hope, that Christ will graciously own us; and by his Intercession will commend us, and our obedience to God's free favour, and acceptation. Neither *gaudia patriæ*; nor *solatia viae*, neither the joys of Heaven, nor the comforts here on Earth, can be merited by us; but are all obtained for us by Christ's Intercession. The good use of Grace doth not merit the increase of Grace; but only procure it: and that not in its own strength, but in the power and dignity of Christ's Mediation. Here is the state of a Christian's Comfort; though our deserts can purchase nothing, yet Christ's Prayers can obtain all things for us. Here is the highest improvement of all our obedience, that it qualifies, and makes us capable of the fruit, and benefit of Christ's Intercession.

II. The Promise, 'tis *Ego rogabo, I will pray* for you: He doth not say, *Ego dabo*; I will give you the Spirit of Comfort; but *I will pray the Father*, that he will give it you. Not but that Christ is the author also of all our Comforts. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and this Son, both in his natural procession, and in his gracious and voluntary communication; but yet we see here, our Saviour doth not assume this gift to his own authority; but ascribes it to his Intercession, and Prayer to his Father.

1. Here is more grace and dignation in it. It argues more love to supplicate for us, than if he himself were bountiful to us. Many a man will do that for his friend, if it be in his power, which yet he will not sue for, or crave for him at another man's hand. *For your sakes he became poor*, saith *St. Paul*; 'Tis true in this sense also; He hath put himself into the low condition of a suppliant, and suiter to his Father in our behalf. *Preces descendit in omnes*. 'Tis more for Christ to be a Petitioner for us, than a Benefactor to us.

2. This form of expression, 'tis more comfortable to us, in that it makes our comfort to be the fruit of his Mediation. As he is God, *nec habuit causam orandi, nec affectum orandi*, saith *Austin*. The Divinity of Christ cannot be said or thought to pray; but as he is God-Man, our Incarnate Saviour; so he prays for us. And this is great matter of comfort.

I. He

1. He doth it *ex officio*, as an authorized High-Priest, in the discharge of the Office the Father hath appointed him; and he hath undertaken to be our Advocate and Mediator. Serm. II.

2. He doth it *ex affectu*, as a merciful High-Priest, in compassion, and fellow-feeling of our wants and necessities.

3. He doth it *ex merito*, as a most meritorious High-Priest. Christ's Prayers are precious prayers, of high value with God the Father. His Prayers are Purchases of Grace and Comfort for us. They say; *Carè emitur, quod precibus emitur*; that's deeply bought, that's bought with Prayers. Sure the Prayers of Christ are of an high price with God, and of infinite vertue.

III. 'Tis *Ego rogabo*; it runs in the future Tense; and so 'tis a promise of Christ's continual Intercession. So long as we are in a state of want, so long we are sure, Christ will continue his mediation for us. He was a Suppliant for us here upon Earth, and yet he performs that office in Heaven. He is now at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us, Rom. viii. 34. He ever lives to make intercession for us, Heb. vii. 25. His hands are not weary, as Moses his were, when he held them up to God in behalf of the People. As long as Christ is in Heaven, a Christian shall not want a supply of comfort. The Saints in Heaven are well-wishers to us, but no mediators for us. We have a communion with them, but we receive no communication from them. What saith the Apostle? Heb. xii. 23. *We are come to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament.* They are our Friends, but he is our only Advocate and Mediator.

But then, the Promise being for hereafter, *I will pray the Father to give you the Spirit*; is not this speech seemingly preposterous? First to require us to love him, and secondly to obey him, and then upon these performances to give his Spirit? who can love him, or obey him, or so much as acknowledge him, till he hath the Spirit? *No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. How then is it, that the Spirit, which is the Principle of Obedience, is here made the reward of Obedience; and the root of Love is made the fruit of Love? I answer:

1. Christ here promises *Non statum, sed gradum*; not the first state, and stock of Grace, but the improvement, and increase, and enlargements of Grace. His preventing Grace, that breeds our Obedience; his subsequent Grace, that rewards our Obedience. *Give the talent unto him that hath ten talents. To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.*

2. This Promise here made us, is of the Spirit, not so much as a Sanctifier, but as he is a Comforter. 'Tis not a promise so much of Sanctification, as of Consolation; and that may well follow the Duties of Love and Obedience. First let's look to our duties, and then our comforts will come afterwards. Christ calls these spiritual consolations, *a Supping with us*, Rev. iii. 20. *I will come, and Sup with him*; that's a refreshing after the work, and labour of the day. These *Euges* of God's Spirit shall be given to us, as encouragements in the practice and pursuance of Piety and Obedience.

We have seen the Procurer is Christ's Prayer for us. Now let's consider, Secondly, The Author and Donor of it, that's *the Father*; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give it you.* And here is,

I. The Donor, *the Father.*

II. The Donation, *He shall give it.*

III. The Parties to be endowed, that's *You*.

I. The Donor, the Father. He is the Original. St. Peter shews the order and conveyance of this gift in his first Sermon on Pentecost, when, as on this Day, the Promise was performed, Act. ii. 33. *Christ being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which now you see and hear.* Christ names him here the Father; a Relative Name it is, but yet without the expressing that to which it refers. And that makes this gracious and sweet Name more comprehensive. Conceive it in these three several relations.

1. It refers to Christ; so 'tis all one, as if he had said, *My Father*. And that makes the Promise of Christ a great deal more hopeful. God is a most loving Father,

Serm. II. Christ a most beloved Son. What can such a Father deny to such a Son? *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee*, Psal. ii. 8. *The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*, Joh. iii. 35. *Orat Christianus, & exauditur; orat Christus, & non exauditur*, saith *Augustine*. Sure the Father will deny him nothing.

2. This Name of *Father* may have another Relation, *Pater vester*; the *Father*, that is, *Your Father*, he will give it you. And that makes the Promise yet more hopeful. Should Christ intercede for Enemies, there were hope of prevailing, Psal. lxxviii. 18. *For his enemies he hath received gifts, even for the rebellious*. But when he sues for his Brethren to their common Father, there is no doubt of obtaining. A sute made to a Father, to be good to his children, is no hard request. *Joab* sued presently, when he sued to *David* for his darling *Abshalom*. *St. Paul's* sute for *Onesimus* is very pathetical; *I beseech thee for my Son Onesimus, whom I have begotten; receive him, that is mine own bowels*. How much more is Christ's Prayer prevalent, *I beseech thee, Father, for these my Brethren, whom thou hast begotten; they are to thee as thine own bowels*? Christ makes this the assurance of this Promise; *Your Heavenly Father will not deny the Holy Ghost to you that ask him*, Luke xi. 13.

3. This Name *Father* hath another reference in Scripture; that makes this promise yet more hopeful. *He is the Father of mercies and consolation*, 2 Cor. i. 3. and so he is the Father of this Blessing, which is here promised us. He is the *Father of comfort*; that is,

1. He hath a natural propensity to it. He is graciously inclined in himself and of himself, to comfort the afflicted.

2. He is stored with comforts and consolations. He hath plenty of them. We may ask *Eliphaz* his Question, *What? are the consolations of God small to thee?*

3. He takes delight in it, as the Father of it. He loves not to grieve the Sons of men: but he loves to comfort them. Comfort is his natural proper work. *De suo bonus, de nostro justus*. We breed our own sorrows and afflictions; but God begets our comforts and consolations. *He delights in mercy*, Micah vii. 18. and that we should delight our selves in his great goodness, Nehem. ix. 25.

That's the Donor, *The Father*.

II. See the Donation, *He will give. I will pray the Father, and he will give you*. 'Tis an expression of much certainty: It runs not thus, *I will pray the Father, that he would give you*: but *I will pray the Father, and he will give you*. 'Tis a word of great assurance. And this assurance, 'tis grounded upon a double priviledge.

1. Is *Privilegium doni*. Promises of Grace, assurances of spiritual comforts are much more absolute, than promises of temporal blessings. We may crave health and wealth, and outward prosperity, and receive that answer, which was given to the Sons of *Zebedee*; *Ye know not what you ask*, 'tis not good for you: But never any man begged Grace of God, and his Holy Spirit; but he did obtain it.

2. This confident Assurance, *He will give*, 'tis *privilegium personæ*, the special priviledge of Christ, our Intercessour; his Prayers are always prevalent and effectual. *Father*, saith Christ, *I know thou hearest me always*, Joh. xi. 42. Our prayers are many times unsuccessful in temporal things for our selves, and sometimes in spiritual things, when we pray for others; but the Prayers of Christ are always prevailing. *He turns not away the face of his anointed, but grants all his petitions*.

III. Take notice of the Parties, to whom this Grant and Donation is made; *He will give you another Comforter*. And they are considerable in a double capacity.

1. Consider them in their Personal capacity, as they were the Apostles then present, and conversing with Christ.

2. Consider them in their Representative capacity, as they did represent the whole body of Christians in after-successions.

1. This Promise was made to the Apostles in their personal capacity; they in Person were to be made partakers of this promised Comforter. I note it to confute that gross and presumptuous error of some ancient Hereticks, *Montanus* and *Manes*, that would

would have this promise made good, this *Paracletus*, and Comforter, to be then sent, when they started up in the Church, and not before; whereas this Promise was made, and made good to the Apostles, who were dead and gone, and in Heaven long before these Heresies were hatched in Hell.

2. Consider them in their representative capacity, in whom Christ intended the whole Body of Believers. *Specialiter dictum, generaliter sapit*. This speech and promise belongs to all, and every Believer. The Apostles indeed had their Apostolical privileges, and eminent endowments, that rested in them, and ceased with them: but the graces and comforts of the Spirit are the common portion of all God's children. They have all *common salvation*, Jude 3. *a like precious Faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. And so are alike partakers of these *great and precious promises*. Our Saviour assures us of our joynt interest in the benefit of his Prayers with the Apostles, John xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them that shall believe in me through their word*. By virtue of this Prayer of Christ, the Church of God hath, and shall enjoy the comforts of the Holy Ghost, unto the end of the World. Now follows,

Thirdly, The Promise and Blessing it self; that's called here *Another Comforter*. And what that is, our Saviour tells us in the twenty sixth Verse, *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost*. And here ye may discover three remarkable Truths concerning the Holy Ghost:

I. Here is the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.

II. Here is the Person of the Holy Ghost.

III. Here is the Office, and Employment of the Holy Ghost.

I. We have here the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. How doth that appear? In that he is promised to be *Another Comforter*? *Alium utique, sed non minorem*: Aug. He promises another, but not an inferior Comforter. The comfort, sure, would be as great, as the loss and sorrow, for which it is a comfort. What was their sorrow? That they must part with Christ, the Son of God. And the loss of his presence cannot be made up, but by one that is equal to him. The Plaister must be as broad as the Soar. None but God can restore us the comforts which we have found in God. 'Twere cold comfort to lose the comforts in God, and then to be put over to the comforts of a Creature. When God told *Moses*, that he would withdraw his own presence from them; but yet would send an Angel to conduct them, what saith *Moses*? *If thy presence go not with us, carry us not from hence*, Exod. xxxiii. 15. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and none do I desire in comparison of thee*. One Sun affords us more light and chearfulness than all the Stars, though never so bright. Let the Sun be set, and 'twill be night, though all the Firmament be full of Stars. He that must supply the comforts of Christ's presence, must be as Christ is, *The God of comfort*: That's his Divinity.

II. Here we have the Person of the Holy Ghost. He is here expressed as a divine Person. Were he but a divine Quality, or Motion, as *Socinus* would make him, we might call it a comfort, but not a Comforter. *Actiones sunt suppositorum*. Actions proceed from Persons. A Comforter is the name of a Person. *The Spirit he shall testify*, saith Christ. *He*, that points out a Person. Surely He, into whose Name we are baptized; He, whose Temples we are made; He, whom we worship, in whose Name we bless our selves, and others, is more than an Action, or Motion, or Attribute; he is a true subsisting divine Person.

III. Come we to his Office and Employment, he is a *Comforter*. The word *Paracletus* admits of a threefold construction:

1. It signifies an Advocate and Intercessour, one that sues for us.

2. It signifies an Encourager, one that exhorts us.

3. It signifies a Comforter, one that ministers consolation to us.

And the Holy Ghost may be said to be all these. And all these he was to the Apostles, as on this time.

1. He was their Intercessour, and made request for them. How powerfully did they pray by his assistance? *Act. iv. 31*. So that when they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled.

2. He was an Encourager to them. How stout and resolute were they? *Peter*, that before

Serm. II. before was frighted by a poor Damfel, how confidently doth he answer the High Priest and Elders? *Acts iv.*

3. He was a comforter to them in all their afflictions; when they were beaten, and shamefully entreated, they *went away rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus, Act. v. 41.*

He is all these to us.

But yet the Exigence of this place makes most for the name of a Comforter, that being a proper remedy for their present Malady. They were now in a pensive and sorrowful condition; and so stood in need of comfort and consolation: And indeed, this name of the *Holy Ghost*, that he is a *Comforter*, 'tis the chief Name above all other his names. As they say of the *Mount of Olives*, though other trees grew there, yet the Olive-tree carried away the Name from all other Fruits: So the *Holy Ghost* is a Spirit of Counsel, and of Fortitude, and of the Fear of the LORD; but above all, he is the Spirit of Comfort. All his other actions and inspirations, they are all to this purpose, to breed us comfort. His illuminations are, that we may be *filled with all joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13.* The troubles and perplexities, which he stirs up in our consciences, they are all intended to breed in us a more sound comfort. *Terret ut exilaret.* He doth perplex us, that he might more sweetly comfort us. As *Joseph* dealt with his Brethren, first he affrighted them, that he might afterwards the more joyce them. His desertions and damps, that often-times arise in the Soul of a Christian, are intended for comfort, that when he returns again to our hearts, we may the more sweetly enjoy him. He ministers *Corosives*, to make way for *Cordials*. 'Tis true, the world skills not of these comforts; but, as *Chrysostom* often speaks to his Auditors, *Sancti intelligunt quid dico*; Christians that are acquainted with God, do feel and find them. Indeed they are Comforts of another nature, than such as the World calls and counts Comforts. As is the Comforter, such are his comforts. Who is our Comforter? The Holy Spirit.

1. He is a Spirit, and such are his comforts, ghostly comforts, spiritual consolations; *Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17.* Then,

2. He is an holy Spirit, and such are his comforts, holy comforts. He will not have us joyce in iniquity, but joyce in the truth. Sensual comforts are sinful Comforts. In that case, our Comforter will be a Reprover. *Joh. xvi. 8. When the Comforter comes he will reprove the World of Sin.* He will comfort us in piety, not sooth and flatter us in our impiety. If we grieve him, he will be sure to grieve us again. 'Tis the solemn prayer of the Church on this Festival, that *we might joyce in his holy comfort.*

There remains one thing, which is,

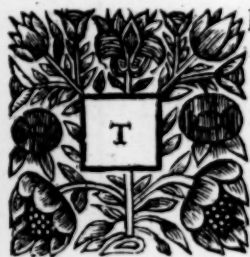
Fourthly, The stability, and constancy of this Comfort, *That he may abide with you for ever.* And that makes it to be comfort indeed, when our Comforter dwells with us, and in us, and never forsakes us. He is not *visitator subitus, sed perpetuus consolator, & cohabitator æternus*, Aug. He comes not guest-wise, to stay for a night, but fixes his abode with us. All other earthly and worldly comforts, the best of them all, are transient and vanishing; they are *breves consolatiunculae*, as *Augustine* terms them. The poor, petty comforts of this world are of no continuance; flashes of comfort, not lasting flames. But the comforts of the Holy Ghost are lasting comforts. The Apostle calls them *strong Consolations*, *Hebr. vi. 18.* St. *Paul* terms them *Everlasting consolations*: *2 Thes. ii. 16. God, that loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, comfort your hearts.* They are such comforts, as no man can deprive us of. *Your joy no man shall take from you, John xvi. 22.* The flame is as the fewel is. Straw and Stubble yield a sudden blaze, and presently out again. And such are all worldly comforts. But this comfort of the Spirit is fed with an everlasting fewel. *The burning of it is fire, and much wood; the Spirit of the Lord, as a River of Oyl, doth feed and maintain it.* He will always abide with us; especially he will then be a Comforter, when we stand most in need of him. In the day of Affliction, in the hour of Temptation, at the point of Death, when all outward comforts fail us, all other comforts leave and forsake us, then this comfort will stand by us, relieve and comfort us. *In the multitude of the sorrows that shall then be in our hearts, his comforts shall refresh our Souls, Psal. xciv. 19.*

O N WHIT-SUNDAY.

The Third Sermon.

ACTS ii. 38.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.



His portion of Scripture, which I have read unto you, 'tis seasonable and suitable to the present time. 'Tis part of the first Sermon, which was preached on the first day of our Christian Pentecost, which we now celebrate.

And as the Occasion of it was the wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles; so in the Sermon, we may discover many great and remarkable evidences and workings of that Spirit.

First, We have here the spirit of Conviction: *The Holy Ghost*, by the preaching of *St. Peter*, reprove and convinces the people of their great sin in crucifying of Christ. And that's one great work of the Holy Ghost. *When the comforter comes*, saith our Saviour, *Joh. xvi. 8. He shall reprove and convince the World of sin.* 'Tis the first manifestation of the Spirit in *St. Peter*. He labours to bring his Auditors to a sight of their sins. *Ye have taken Jesus Christ, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him*, Verse 23. What the Prophet *Micah* saith of himself, *Chap. iii. 8. is most true of St. Peter, Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sins.* That's the first evidence of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Conviction.

And then,

Secondly, We have a second Evidence of it in the People, and that's the Spirit of Compunction, in the foregoing verse ye have it; *When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men, and Brethren, What shall we do?* I, this is a proper and a kindly work, when the word of conversion begets in us the work of compunction. It was not their hearing the Apostles speak in divers Languages, the wonderful works of God, *Verse 11.* that did work this effect in them; (the most of them mocked at that, the best did but wonder at it) but the charging of their sins upon their consciences, *Tou have been the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God*, that word pierced and wounded their hearts, that wrought in them a serious compunction.

And what these men did, *St. Paul* tells us, will be found in other men, *1 Cor. xiv. 23. If ye all speak with strange Tongues, and there come in those, that are unbelievers, will they not say, Ye are mad?* (There is small difference 'twixt drunkenness and madness) but if ye prophesie, preach to their consciences, then a Sinner is convinced of all, and judged of all. That's the second manifestation of the Spirit in this work of Compunction. And then,

Thirdly, We have a third manifestation, that's the Spirit and work of conversion: to which *Peter* directs them in the words of my Text, *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* So

Serm. III.

So then the words I have read unto you, are St. Peter's prescription to these distressed and perplexed Sinners, shewing them what course they must take to ease and cure the anguish of their hearts, and to settle in themselves the peace and comfort of their souls and consciences. And of it we will take a double consideration.

First, In general, we will take notice of the course St. Peter takes with them.

Secondly, We will consider the Particulars of the Prescription, which he doth commend to them.

First, for the course he takes with them ; it stands thus. In the foregoing Verse ye see he had cast them into a great perplexity ; now follows the Remedy, which St. Peter prescribes them. And now indeed St. Peter comes to his proper work, shews himself a right Minister of the Gospel. The proper effect of the Gospel is not to terrifie and afright men ; but to ease and comfort them. The Gospel, 'tis not the Ministracion of death and horror ; but of life and comfort. 'Tis the Office of the Law to wound the conscience with the sense of sin ; the work of the Gospel is to pacifie the conscience, and relieve it with comfort. The Law, that works in us *the spirit of fear*, and of *bondage* ; but the Gospel begets in us *the spirit of love*, and of a *sound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7.

Indeed 'tis requisite we should be first perplexed before we be comforted ; first we must know what a wounded spirit is, ere God will acquaint us with the *spirit of peace*. God, and his Gospel comforts none, but such as be of a contrite spirit. As Bernard speaks sweetly, *Deus non infundit oleum misericordiae, nisi in vas contritum*. God never powers in the Oil of mercy, but into a contrite and broken heart. A broken vessel will hold it best. A sinner, not troubled with the sense of sins, *nec vult, nec potest, nec debet*, neither will, nor can, no, nor ought to lay hold on the comforts of the Gospel.

Compunction and Contrition is that which the Gospel expects of us. But the Gospel doth not break or bruise us by its own strength, by Evangelical means ; they are all of a healing and suppling nature : but it makes use of the Hammer of the Law ; that gives those strokes and blows which bring us to contrition. As a Physician that comes to cure some diseased party, and finding some Ulcer, or impostumed Sore, he calls for a Chyrurgeon, uses his help to cut and lance it : So the Gospel, 'tis all for curing and healing ; but finding an impostume of sin in our hearts, it makes use of the Law to prick the heart, and let out the Corruption. As he that means to take some wild beast, not to destroy it, but to tame it, and keep it alive, he lets loose his Dogs, sets up his nets, and then, when 'tis hamper'd in the toyl, and ready to be worried, then he comes in, takes off the Dogs, heals it, if it be hurt, and wounded, and keeps it alive : So God sets loose the terrors of the Law, they hunt, and pursue the soul of a sinner ; and when 'tis seiz'd upon, and in the very jaws of Hell, the Gospel comes in, and rescues and relieves it.

Will you see, that the proper work of the Gospel is not to wound, but to cure ; not to afflict, but to comfort ; not to cast down, but to raise up ; look upon Christ's first commission ; There is contained the tenor of the Gospel, there you shall find the proper Work, for which Christ came. Luk. iv. 18. he opens his commission at his first Sermon, which he preached at Nazareth : *The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, to give sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*. Here is poverty, brokenness of heart, captivity, blindness, bruising. The Gospel finds us thus, it makes us not thus. These are all the works of the Law, convincing us of sin ; the Gospel undertakes the cure of them ; that brings the balm of Gilead. *He comes with healing in his wings*.

'Twas St. Peter's proper work to relieve and comfort those distressed souls. See, he readily and speedily undertakes, and effects it.

First, It shews his Skill.

Secondly, It shews his Care.

Thirdly, It shews his Compassion.

First, It shews his Skill. He speaks not to these distressed Creatures, as sometime Elisha did of the perplexed Shunamite, 2 King. iv. 27. O! saith he, *her Soul is vexed within*

within her, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. No; Peter discerns their Malady, and hath a present Remedy to apply to them. See here a learned Scribe fully instructed for the Kingdom of Heaven, able to administer a word of direction in the greatest extremity. Like that good Samaritan, *Luk. x. 34.* he carries his Wine and Oil about him, hath them in a readiness upon all occasions.

'Tis the greatest evidence and argument of skill in Religion, thus to be able to ease and cure the wound of Conscience. As it shews him to be an expert Chyrurgeon, not that can heal any outward wound, or sore only; but that can cure an inward Ulcer, stanch the bleeding of a vein within: so 'tis good to be able to comfort people in outward sorrows; but he is a Physician of some value, that can stay the bleeding of a wounded Conscience. As *Augustine* upon that place of the *Galathians*, Chap. vi. 1. *If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one; Nihil adeo virum spiritualem demonstrat, ac alienæ conscientie tractatio.* He is a spiritual man indeed, that can handle a troubled conscience dexterously. Many place Learning in other matters, to dispute Controversies, to resolve hard Questions; but Christ counts this the highest point of learning to be able to direct and comfort the soul of a sorrowful Sinner. *Isai. l. 4.* *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the Learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.*

That's the first, it shews his Skill.

Secondly, And then it shews his care. He makes haste to give ease to the souls of these men. *St. Peter* neglects no opportunity to do good to men's souls. He was once questioned for being too forward in preaching to *Cornelius*, *Act. xi.* he was never charged for being too backward. Above all, God requires our care over such as these men were, cast into perplexity. The lost Groat, search for that diligently; the lost Sheep, look out for that speedily. Of all others take care of such, as these men in perplexity. God is most regardful of such. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart*, *Psal. xxxiv. 18.* And so he loves we should be nigh them too: as ye love your servants should take care of all your little ones; but if any be sick, or in pain, O! stir not from that. If you take not the season to comfort them, ye may come too late. As *Paul* speaks to the *Corinthians*: Comfort the excommunicate man, lest *Satan* devour him. A little delay may make things desperate. As *Jehu* at his leisure, bethought himself of *Jezabel's* body, *Go visit her, and bury her*; O you should have spoken sooner, 'tis too late now, the Dogs have devoured her.

That's the second; it shews his care. And then,

Thirdly, It shews his Compassion. *St. Peter* is thus quick and speedy to give ease and comfort; his bowels, no doubt, yearned within him in tenderness over them. Here is an evidence of an Apostolical Spirit. *Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* *2 Cor. xi. 29.* O! it was cruelty in those hard-hearted, Levite, and Priest, that saw the man lie wounded and bleeding, and turned away from him, *Luke x. 32.* How barbarous were the High-Priests to see the Soul of *Judas* weltring in his gore, crying out in anguish, and never regard him! *What is that to us? see thou to it.* A Levite, and a Priest, cruel and uncompassionate? *What saith St. Paul? A Priest must be such an one as can have compassion on the souls of men,* *Heb. v. 2.* Every one will pity a poor bleeding Infant, that hath taken a fall; I, but the Nurse, that should have had it always in her arms, she will run, and spring forth in compassion, and catch it up presently.

We have seen the course *St. Peter* takes with these men in the General.

Come we now,

Secondly, to the Particulars of *St. Peter's* Prescription. In it ye may observe these two things.

First, Is the Means he prescribes.

Secondly, Is the Help and Benefit, he tells them, they shall find by the use of those Means.

First, The Means, he prescribes, they are two. The

I. Is a purging.

II. Is

Serm. III:

II. Is a bathing.

I. Repent: that's the purging of the soul.

II. Be baptized; there is the bathing.

Secondly, The Help and Benefit he promises them; that's double,

I. Health.

II. Strength.

I. Health; *They shall receive remission of Sins.*II. Strength; *They shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

I. The first means is Repentance; that's the first Ingredient in the Cure. The first Evangelical Duty, that God requires for obtaining mercy and pardon, 'tis Repentance. Before our Faith can be perswaded of pardon, nay, before it can lay hold of pardon, nay, before God will reach out his Pardon, he exacts Repentance. Before thou stretch out thine hand of Faith, thou must humble thy self upon the knee of Repentance. Faith, that's the Cordial to revive and comfort thee, but Repentance that's the Purgation that must first work, and fit thee to receive this Cordial. Still the Scripture gives the precedency to Repentance. 'Tis the Primitive original Grace, even before Faith it self, as it serves to justifie. All the promises are made only to the penitent. 'Twas the first Lesson St. John preached, Mat. iii. 2. *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* 'Twas the first Lesson our Saviour taught, Mark i. 15. *Repent, and believe the Gospel.* First repent, and then believe the Gospel. 'Twas the first Lesson the Apostles preached, Mark vi. 12. *They preached that men should repent,* Heb. vi. 1. 'Tis called *The Foundation of Repentance.* St. Paul sets this Grace in its proper place, Acts xx. 21. *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

For understanding the goodness of this Prescript of Repentance, take notice of it in these four respects.

1. See the Necessity of this Spiritual Medicine.

2. The Propriety of it.

3. The Efficacy of it.

4. The Seasonableness of it in St. Peter's prescription.

1. Take notice of the Necessity of it. And you will find, that Repentance is absolutely necessary to the obtaining of Pardon. It carries with it not only the necessity of a Duty, we sin, if we do it not; but the necessity of a Remedy, we perish, if we omit it. As when a loving Father shall command his sick Child to use such a Medicine to save his life, should the Child refuse it, he sins not only as a disobedient Child against his Father, but as a desperate Creature against his own life. Impenitency is the damning sin. All sins deserve damnation, but 'tis impenitency which doth actually cast us. As he that hath eaten poyson, hath done that which in it self is deadly; but yet there is an Antidote that can cure it: now to refuse the Antidote, is more desperate. Other sins are *contra officia*, against our Duty; but Impenitency is *contra remedium*, 'tis against our recovery. Still the Scripture promises this, as a necessary Condition for obtaining mercy. Acts v. 3. *Him God hath exalted, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* First Repentance, and then forgiveness. Luke 24. 37. *It was necessary, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.* Again, Acts xi. 18. *Then hath God to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* 'Tis every where strictly exacted, necessarily prescribed, no Salvation without it.

2. 'Tis a proper cure for Sin, this penitential sorrow. To speak truly, sorrow and remorse, 'tis good for nothing but to destroy Sin. God, when he implanted this affection in our souls, he intended it only for this purpose, to purge and cure our spiritual maladies. We indeed imploy it otherwise; we make use of this Herb of Grace for other ends. We sorrow for loss of Friends, for loss of health, for loss of Riches; but we mis-apply it, 'tis purposely meant to bewail our sins, and to cure our Souls: How will that appear? Let Saint Chrysostom tell you. "Would you know the Nature, and Vertue of any Medicine, what it is good for, whether it be fit to cure this wound, or that pain, or such a sickness? observe the working of it, see what good it doth. If we apply it to such a sore, and it doth not cure it,

we

"we say we are mistaken, we will use it no more to that purpose. If we use it for
 "help in another malady, and it works kindly, and brings a cure with it, we con-
 "clude 'tis good for this disease only, not for the other. Then make the trial of thy
 "sorrow by this Experiment. Thou hast lost some dear friend by death, and thou sor-
 "rowest for him; but can thy sorrow recover him? Thou hast received some great loss
 "in thine estate, thou mournest for that; but with all thy sorrow canst thou make it
 "up again? 'Tis so in all outward afflictions; all thy sorrow for them, 'tis spilt and un-
 "profitable. Sorrow then was not made for these. But then, on the other hand, thou
 "hast committed a sin, by it lost God's favour, wounded thy Conscience, hazarded thy
 "salvation; sorrow, and mourn, and lament for these, and thou recoverest all again.
 "Thy sorrow will abolish thy sin, recover God's favour, pacify thy Conscience, re-set-
 "tle thy hope, and assurance of Heaven. Surely, we may conclude, sorrow was intend-
 "ed for these spiritual purposes; 'tis sovereign for these, and for nothing else.

3. See the efficacy of this prescript, the strength and virtue of this Balm of Gi-
 lead. 'Tis able to work strange cures, to recover men of desperate maladies. These
 men to whom St. Peter prescribes it, and that were helped by it, were not ordi-
 nary sinners, but guilty of a most heinous and detestable wickedness; They had
 been murderers of our blessed Saviour, spilt the blood of the Lord of Glory. Mur-
 der in any kind, is a grievous sin; The Conscience of a Murderer, can hardly be
 pacified, or once hope for pardon. Cain, when he murdered his brother Abel, he
 cries out, his sin was greater than could be pardoned. How much more grievous was
 the sin of these men, that stand guilty of the blood of the Son of God? Yet see,
 St. Peter doubts not, but by Repentance, this sin may be pardoned, and their Con-
 sciences appeased, and fully pacified.

See then the Sovereign virtue and efficacy of Repentance; it can cure the soul
 of the greatest sin; procure pardon for the most crying wickedness. As no sin is
 so small, but it needs Repentance; so no sin so great, but may be done away by this
 grace of Repentance. We count that a rare Instrument, that can *perfringere ad maxi-*
ma et minima, that can serve for all works, great and little: So, sure, Repentance
 hath an admirable virtue, thus to have power over all kind of sins. It must be
 a rare medicine, that can cure all diseases, a *myxion*. In course of Physick, they
 say there are some diseases that are *Opprobria Medicorum*, they are the shame of Phy-
 sicians, they know not what to say to them, they must leave Nature to it self to
 wrestle and strive with them: But, in course of Religion, there are no sins, but the
 grace of Repentance will master them, and prevail over them. This God assures of,
Isa. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his imaginations, and return
unto the LORD, for he will abundantly pardon. And then he adds, *For my thoughts are not*
as your thoughts. As if he should say, "You use to pardon small faults, to revenge
 "great ones; pardon petty-larceny, punish Robberies, Blood-shed: I, but repen-
 "tance shall obtain at God's hands pardon of the greatest crimes. See what an
 ample Commission Christ hath granted for the pardon of sins, *Whosoever sins ye*
remit, they shall be remitted, Joh. xx. 23. No persons excluded, no sins excepted.
 St. Peter prescribes this salve of Repentance, even to Christ's Murderers. That's
 the third, the Efficacy of it.

4. Take notice of the Seasonableness of this prescription. Which I note the rather,
 because it may seem somewhat strange, that St. Peter should urge these men to sorrow
 and repentance, they were already deeply cast down with sorrow and anguish, they
 were *prickt at the heart, pierced*, and wounded with sorrow and perplexity. One would
 think some other course were more seasonable, than thus to urge them to further sor-
 row and repentance. No, no, St. Peter is right, he sees their souls are in perplexity, and
 yet he calls upon them to repent: they are in sorrow, and yet they must sorrow if
 they mean to be eased.

There is indeed a large difference 'twixt that sorrow which they already felt, and
 that penitential sorrow which St. Peter enjoins them. Ye may observe a threefold
 difference.

(1.) Their former sorrow, it was a legal sorrow, wrought into them by the
 terrours of God's Law, and the sense of their sin: but the sorrow, Saint Peter
 H h commends

Serm. III. commends to them, is an Evangelical sorrow, a sorrow wrought by the Gospel, and a gift of Christ. The former kind of sorrow arises in the Soul upon apprehension of God's wrath, and fear of damnation. And this is useful and requisite. *Fac, fac, vel timore pœnæ, si non potes ex amore justitiæ.* But then, the repentance of the Gospel, that's wrought into us out of an apprehension of God's mercy and goodness, and so makes us grieve that we have offended him. A malefactor, that looks for nothing but death, he is sorrowful and perplexed, but it is because he is cast and condemned: But then, when he hears the King will pardon him, if he humble and submit himself, and sorrow for his offence, his sorrow now is of another nature; he mourns now for offending so gracious a Prince. That's the first difference; the one is Legal, the other Evangelical.

(2.) Their former sorrow and compunction, it was *dolor passivus*, a pang and passion of sorrow that seiz'd upon them, whether they would or no: But the penitential sorrow, that Saint Peter exhorts them to, 'tis *dolor activus*, a voluntary, willing sorrow, to which they must stir up, and provoke themselves: When God makes our sins appear in our Consciences, our Soul cannot but be amazed and perplexed, our Conscience will startle and be affrighted at them. The flashes of Hell-fire cannot but scare us: But that's not this penitential sorrow, which Peter commends to them. This must be a deliberate voluntary grief. When a man sets himself to mourn, and bewail his transgressions, he is not barely haunted with his sins, but he calls his sins to remembrance, searches them out. Repentance that the Gospel commands, 'tis a willing Repentance.

1. Look upon it in the Original, 'tis a Grace, and that's seated in the will, it serves to enable it, and to make it willing.

2. Look upon it in the Exercise, so 'tis a Duty; God requires and expects repentance. Now, God requires our actions. Sufferings are not commanded, but inflicted; but Duties are enjoined, and we must willingly perform them.

3. Look upon it in the Use, so 'tis a Condition upon the performance of which God doth covenant with us. Now he that means to reap good by the Covenant, must himself actively and willingly fulfil the Conditions. All which shews us, that Evangelical, and Penitential sorrow must be elective, we must stir up our selves to this spiritual sorrow. A true Penitent must provoke himself to sorrow, praying that he may sorrow; grieving that he cannot grieve, never repenting that he hath repented.

(3.) The sorrow they felt before, when their hearts were pricked, differs from the sorrow to which St. Peter exhorts them; that was *Dolor morbi*, the pain of the Disease: but this he requires of them, 'tis *Dolor Medicinæ*, the smart that comes by the Cure and Medicine. To take those anguishes of Conscience into which they were cast for true Repentance, is to take the malady for the remedy, and the smart of the wound for the cure and plaister. As in a wound there is a double smart; first, when 'tis made and bleeds; and festers: the second is, when the wound is searched and dressed, and salve put into it. The man that was wounded, *Luke x.* felt pain, when the Thieves wounded him; he felt smart too, when the Samaritan dressed him. So these mens hearts were pricked, when their sins were charged upon them, but that was the smart of the wound; but St. Peter calls them to another sorrow, *Repent*, saith he, that's the smart of the Medicine.

There is a great deal of difference betwixt the accusations of Conscience, and the confessions of Conscience. A natural man's Conscience can accuse and testify our sins; but 'tis a sanctified Conscience, that confesses and bewails our sins. And therefore we see Saint Peter goes about to cure the former sorrow, by prescribing this other sorrow. They cry out, *O! what shall we do to be rid of this hellish sorrow that hath seized upon us?* Oh! saith Saint Peter, make use of heavenly sorrow, that will redress it. 'Tis strange, that sorrow should cure sorrow; and yet it will do so. As when one hath burnt his flesh with fire, 'tis good to hold the burning to the fire; fire will fetch out the burning: so will spiritual sorrow ease, and allay that other sorrow. As Physicians will cure men of Scouring and Bloody fluxes, not by staying the flux, but by giving Purges. Alas, we think that increases the malady.

No, 'tis the best way to cure it. 'Tis good to observe the difference 'twixt these two sorrows. 'Tis not every stroke of Conscience, every check of soul, not every pang of sorrow, that's true repentance; we may feel all these, and feel them in extremity, and yet the bitter Pill of Repentance must be taken down for all that. That's the first means, a spiritual purging. Come we,

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II. To the second Means, which St. Peter percribes them, that's a spiritual bathing; that's the Sacrament of Baptism. And here are two things observable.

1. Is the Sacramental Action, *Be baptized.*

2. Is the Spiritual Relation which it doth import, and imply, and which enlivens this Sacrament, and makes it effectual; that's, *In the Name of Jesus Christ.*

1. Is the Sacramental Action; they must be *Baptized*. An holy Rite, in a special manner appropriated by the Primitive Church to the days of Pentecost. They esteemed the washing by the Holy Ghost to be most seasonable upon the solemn Festival of the Holy Ghost.

This outward, external, bodily Ceremony of washing in Water, 'tis of divine institution, and necessary. Indeed Infidelity, and carnal reason is inquisitive, and is ready to object, *What? is not inward conversion and repentance sufficient? Do not vilifie that which God doth sanctifie. What need these outward Ceremonious Applications?* Naturally we are prone to take exceptions against these sacred institutions. Socinus makes it at best, now, but an indifferent arbitrary Ceremony. As Naaman the Syrian did, *What means this washing seven times in Jordan?* What virtue can there be in that poor Element to do away sins, and to work upon our souls? But Faith and Piety know no such reasonings; but gladly submit to means of Gods chusing. *John ix. 7. Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation Sent, and thou shalt be recovered.* Let the means be what it will, if Christ sends us to it, it shall be effectual. Purposely Christ uses these bodily means, as special conveyances of spiritual Grace: Even amongst men, we see outward Evidences and Seals, are accounted strong Assurances. We are not content to have Estates passed over to us by bare Word; but Writings and Seals, Livery and Seisin, are all requisite. Naturally, we ask, as Abraham did, *In quo cognoscam?* How shall it appear that my sin is pardoned? *What shall be the Sign,* saith Hezekiah, *that I shall recover?* Saint Paul was a deep Penitent, yet what faith Ananias to him? *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,* Acts xxii. 16. And thus these means are outwardly mean, (as washing by Water, as when Christ cured the blind man, he made no curious exquisite salve, but used a little clay, to anoint him withal) that it might appear, that the glory of the Miracle belonged to Christ, not to the means. Purposely God employs very mean instruments, that our Faith may only depend upon his Power, and that our thankfulness may ascribe it only to his Glory.

In particular, Christ prescribes this Sacrament of Baptism, and washing in Water, that Element fitly resembling those spiritual effects which are wrought in Baptism.

1. Water hath a force of drawing, and killing, and suffocating any breathing thing. And this quality of Water is a fit resemblance of the Grace of Baptism. A Sinner, coming to this Sacrament, hath all his sins drowned and abolished. As the Red Sea, (that famous Type of Christian Baptism) drowned all the Egyptians, that pursued Gods People, not one escaped, all lay dead upon the shore; so, though an Army of sins pursue the soul of a penitent Sinner, yet, when he enters into this Red Sea, all his iniquities are drowned and abolished. Thus Micah sweetly describes that gracious act of pardoning of Sins, Chap. vii. 19. *He will subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depth of the Sea.* This Paul calls a *burying in Baptism*. Our sins are over-whelmed in the Water of Baptism; the Sea of Christ's blood swallows them up.

2. Water hath a power of quenching; and such a spiritual virtue there is in Baptism, it allays the heat of our natural concupiscence, quenches and extinguishes the boylings and inflammations of our sinful lusts. The ambitious and covetous desires of the world, the carnal desires of the flesh, the unsatiable thirstings of our souls after sinful pleasures: this Grace, which Baptism ministers to us, if we make use of it, are all quenched by it.

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3. Water,

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3. Water, 'tis a cleansing Element, it walhes away filthiness; and so doth Baptism; it purges a sinner from all defilements of flesh and spirit, *Ephes. iv. 26. Christ sanctifies his Church, and cleanseth it with the washing of Water by the Word.* Thus Christ compares his Church to a flock of Sheep, that come up from the washing, *Cant. iv. 2.* The virtue of this Sacrament, *Ezekiel* foretels: *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness,* Chap. xxxvi. 25.

4. Water hath a fructifying virtue in it; 'tis a fruitful Element, and makes other things fruitful. *Let the Waters bring forth abundantly,* Gen. i. 28. So this Sacrament by Divine institution, and benediction, 'tis a Fountain of living Water, a Font, and Laver of Regeneration. Newness of life we draw from hence, from our spiritual Baptism: As it is said of the Waters of the Sanctuary, *Ezek. xlvi. 9. Every thing shall live whither the River cometh.* See how abundantly these waters brought forth. Three thousand were baptized and renewed in one day. That's the Action: Then,

2. The relation of it, which enlivens the action, and makes it effectual, is, that it must be done in the Name of Jesus Christ. What means that? I can but touch it.

1. In his Name, that is, by his Authority. He alone can institute a Sacrament, he alone can make the Seal, that must confirm his Covenant; as not the highest Officer in the Kingdom hath power to authorise a publick Seal of Office, 'tis an act of supreme and Sovereign Authority.

2. In his Name, that is, Be Baptized in the Faith of Jesus his Name; through Faith in his Name, so St. Peter expounds it, *Act. iii. 16.* A Sacrament without Faith, is a Seal to a Blank: When the Eunuch sued to be baptized, Philip strictly exacts Faith of him; *What doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,* *Act. viii. 36, 37.*

3. In the Name of Jesus Christ, that is, in the solemn and holy profession of Christ, into his Religion, into the fellowship and communion of his holy profession. In Baptism we take upon us Christ's Cognisance and Livery. We then openly vouch our selves to become his servants, renounce all other dependances, testify to the World, that we are his followers. *Nicodemus* his night-addresses will not serve the turn; the Gospel calls us to a publick engagement. When that great Oratour, *Victorinus*, told a Bishop privately, that he was become a Christian; the Bishop told him, he would not believe him, till he saw him make a solemn profession in the face of the Church. *What?* said he, *Do the Church-walls make a Christian?* The Bishop still held him to it, and so brought him to his publick profession.

We have done with the first Particular of the Text, the Means which St. Peter percribes them; Now,

Secondly, Take notice briefly of the Benefits, which upon the use of this Means he doth assure them; And they are two.

I. Remission of sins.

II. Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I. Remission of sins. And this will appear,

1. A seasonable benefit.

2. A full and compleat benefit.

1. Forgiveness of sins, 'twill be most seasonable and welcome to them. Men in their case and perplexity, had rather hear of the pardon of their sins, than that all the goods of the world should betide them. Indeed while we are at ease, and our sins stir not, while our conscience lies asleep, and doth not affright us, we account it but slight news, but cold comfort, to tell us that Christ came to pardon our sins. If Peter come to us as to the lame Cripple, *Act. iii. 6.* and say, *Silver and Gold have I none,* but I can shew thee a course to obtain pardon of thy sin; we can slight him, and his Offer. Let such listen to him, that stand in need of him. But to a contrite broken-hearted Sinner, no tidings like to this, to tell him, and assure him, his sins are forgiven him. *David's* repentance will witness this, *Psal. xxxii. 3.* The guilt of his sins caused him to roar all the day long. Being in that case, what is that above all things in the world he most esteemed and longed for? You may learn that, by this Exclamation, *O! blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven,* whose

whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity. That blessing is the main priviledge and portion of the Church. *The People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*, *Isai. xxxiii. 24.* 'Tis the only Sanctuary and City of Refuge. St *Augustine* compares it to that Sanctuary, or *Asylum* that *Romulus* set up for all Malefactors; *Nostræ civitatis Asylum est vera remissio peccatorum.* This mercy, 'tis the sinful soul's Sanctuary and City of Refuge. Other means may stupifie, and benum our Conscience, and lay it asleep; only this assurance can truly and effectually quiet and comfort it, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.*

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2. This mercy here promised is a full compleat comfort: 'Tis *Remission of sins*, in the plural number. They were charged by St. *Peter* only with one sin, the murdering of Christ, and their Consciences accordingly were troubled with the guilt of that sin: and yet St. *Peter* here assures them of the pardon, and forgiveness of all their sins. I, God's mercy, and true repentance, and the Grace of Baptism, pardons compleatly, leaves no sin upon the score, forgives all. As in bodily cures, when Christ cast out one Devil, he cast out all; seven Devils out of *Mary Magdalen*; a whole legion of Devils, left not one remaining: So, when he pardons one sin, he forgives all.

1. God's love, 'tis not partial and imperfect, pardoning some, and retaining others. God compounds not with his Debtors, as men do, for half; but remits the whole debt. He bids us not blot out an hundred, and set down fifty upon our account; but forgives the whole sum, though ten thousand talents.

2. And then repentance, though it be occasioned by some one sin, yet it bewails all, detests all, forsakes all. A good Christian will leave no sin unrepented of. *Quod propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit.* He that sorrows for one offence against God, will sorrow for all. As he that breaks one Commandment, breaks all; so, he that truly sorrows for one sin, will repent of all. *David* bemoaning his murder and adultery, bewails his original and birth-sin too: *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my Mother conceive me.*

3. The grace of Baptism doth not only seal up the actual remission of our by-past sins; but it hath a force even for the pardoning of the sins of our whole life. Not, that all our sins past, present, and to come, are actually all forgiven in Baptism; but, because in our Baptism God seals up that Covenant, by which he assures us, he will pardon all our sins upon our repentance; and thus the force of Baptism reaches to the pardon of future sins. After the People had passed to the Red-Sea, and again sinned in the Wilderness, God commanded them to return again to the Red-Sea, *Numb. xiv. 25.* So, after our Baptism, when we sin against God, he sends us back to the penitent and faithful remembrance of our Baptism. The virtue of that Covenant will afford us pardon.

II. Come we to the second Benefit, that's *The receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Not, but that the work of Repentance, and the grace of Baptism come all from the Spirit: and therefore this last promise gives not the first stock of grace, but doth increase and improve it. *Non inchoat sua dona, sed cumulat,* saith *Leo.*

To pass by many things observable in the words;

1. Grace is a gift, not inbred in us, nor deserved or purchased by us.
2. We must receive it; we are only passive and receptive of Grace. The Spirit is the only agent, we are but receivers of the gift of grace.

To pass by these: consider only these two things;

1. The order.
2. The nature of this gift.

1. The order; and that stands thus,

Repent and be baptized, and then receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. First, here is cleansing required, and then beautifying. Before the Spirit comes to reside and dwell in us, we must by Repentance and Faith prepare a fit mansion and resting place for it. What Christ saith of the evil spirit in a wicked man, *Mat. xii.* may be said of the holy Spirit in the heart of a penitent and faithful Christian; when he finds the house of the Soul clean, and swept, and garnished, then he comes and brings with him seven other spirits of grace, and dwells in him. *Res delicata est Spiritus*

Ser. III Spiritus Dei, faith Tertullian. The Holy Ghost abhors uncleanness, will not come near to a defiled Soul. *Omnia inquinamenta, pœnitentia verrens, & radens, & foras ejiciens, mundam pectoris domum superventuro spiritui parat, quo se cum omnibus donis libens ingerat,* Tertul. Repentance sweeps the house, carries out all filth; that so the Holy Ghost may enter into us. That's the order. Consider,

2. The nature of this gift. The gifts of the Holy Ghost were of two sorts.

1. Those that are usually called *gratis data*, gifts tending to edification of others; as tongues, and other Ministerial enablements. They were the gifts of this day, but not the only gifts.

2. Others are gifts of personal concernment, for the good of the receivers, to further their salvation. And these were promised and bestowed on this day. I will name them in a threefold expression.

(1.) The grace of Sanctification, that was the gift and benefit of this day. That was reserved till this time for the plenty of it, *John vii. 38. He that believes in me, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living waters.* Verse 39. *This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him, should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified:* Sprinklings of Grace there were before, but the effusions of Grace were reserved till now.

(2.) The grace of Obligation and Sealing, that was the work and gift of the Spirit, that came this day. This is one great Office of the Holy Ghost, to ratify and seal up to us the forgiveness of our sins, and all the benefits of our Redemption. *Ephes. i. 13. In whom, after you believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, by which ye are sealed.* *Ephes. iv. 30.*

(3.) The grace of Consolation, that's another work and gift of the Spirit, that was also the gift of this day. *I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth.*

1. In regard of our Sanctification, so the Holy Ghost is *spirituale robur*, a gift of grace enabling us.

2. In respect of our assurance, so he is *sigillum*, a seal confirming us.

3. In respect of comfort and consolation, so he is *osculum*, the kifs of love and peace, to rejoyce and comfort us.

And this assurance that *Peter* gives them of their receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, it will afford us a threefold meditation.

See here,

1. *Charitatem Petri*; his earnest desire to have the gift of the Spirit communicated to them. He doth not desire to have it restrained, and appropriated to himself, and his fellow-Apostles; but hopes and desires that others should share in it. Many a man would say, "Let them be pardoned, and their sins forgiven them; but for these glorious gifts of the Holy Ghost, let them rest on us as Apostolical Preachers. No, the Spirit of God in *St. Peter* is of a diffusive, and communicating nature, desirous that others be partakers with him. *Joshua* was a little envious in this kind. When *Eldad* and *Medad* prophesied, he would have *Moses* prohibit them. What faith *Moses*? *Enviest thou for my sake? I would to God, that all the People did prophesie, and that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them,* *Numb. xi. 29.* 'Twas *Paul's* wish to *Agrippa*, *I would to God, not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am.* How ready were the Apostles to minister this gift of the Spirit upon all occasions? When *Philip* had converted the Samaritans, *Acts viii.* presently *Peter* and *John* hastened to *Samaria*, to lay their hands on those Converts, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. When *Paul* came to *Ephesus*, his first Question was, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And forthwith he laid his hands upon them, and so the Holy Ghost descended upon them.* There is no better sign of grace, than the desires of working grace in another. See here,

2. The bounty of God; whom he pardons, those he enriches and stores with grace. These poor sinners would be glad of pardon. God will not not only pardon them, but also enrich them with his choicer gifts. The *Roman* Story tells us of a *Roman* Senatour, that having railed on the Emperour *Augustus*, came next day and

and beg'd his pardon; which *Augustus* granted him; but then the Senatour added, *Serm. III.*
No man will believe you have forgiven me, except you will bestow some great gift upon me; and accordingly the Emperour gave him a rich and a bountiful gift to assure him of pardon. 'Tis so with us; to assure us of mercy, God enriches us with Grace. As the loving Father receives his returning Prodigal; not only receives him, but embraces him. *He doth abundantly above all that we can ask or think;* gives us what our Prayers dare not presume to ask.

3. Learn here the duty and obligation of a Penitent. *Donum obligat ad officium.* If God bestows this gift on us; that very gift obliges us to use it. We must not be content to have our sins pardoned, but we must set our selves to perform better obedience. The Prodigal sues not only for forgiveness, but craves employment; *Make me as one of thy hired servants,* enable me to serve thee, put me into thy service; grant me the talents of thy Grace, that I may redeem my ill-spent time, by gaining glory to Thee.

Twenty

SERMONS

Preached at sundry Times,

UPON

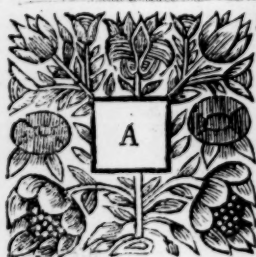
Several other Subjects.

A

S E R M O N

O N

ACTS xvi. 33.

He washed their stripes.

THIS whole Book (the Annals of the Church indeed, not so much the Acts, as the Sufferings of the Apostles, the Churches Martyrology, as that) in general, so in a special manner this present Chapter, 'tis a relation of that success, and entertainment, which the preaching of the Apostles had in publishing the Gospel. And so, by proportion, conceive it as a lively representation of that success, that the Ministry of the Gospel shall usually find, even to the end of the world.

First, Here is *Philippi*, a famous and populous City, and *Λαὸς πολλὸς ἐν πόλει*, should be God's proportion, *Act. xviii. 10.* God should have much People in a great City.

Secondly, Here is *St. Paul*, a powerful Preacher, *σάραξ τῶν ἑρηνῶν*, as the Father calls him. And yet what is the gain of all his labour? How many in our City shall be saved? saith he of his *Antioch*, *Molestum est, quod dicam, non est in tot millibus centesimum invenire*, the fruit and improvement of all his Preaching, is the conversion of a poor Purple-seller, and a wretched Gaoler. *Apud Coriarium Petrus, apud Purpurariam Paulus*, saith *St. Chrysostom*. A Tanner believes, and receives *St. Peter*; a Purple-seller listens, and obeys *St. Paul*. Few contemptible, weak, despised things are the spoils and triumphs of the Gospel. *O nova vocationis principia!* saith the Father, of Christ's Converts: *Vocavit publicanum, post hunc meretricem, post hanc latronem, post hunc blasphemum*: Publicans, Gaolers, Harlots, Murderers, Blasphemers, are the first fruits of the Gospel.

In special, here are three varieties of Auditors, that *St. Paul's* Preaching finds in *Philippi*; and in them you may take a view of the several success and entertainment of our Preaching

First, Here is *Lydia religiosa*, Verse 14. A devout Woman, of holy education, a worshipper

worshipper of God according to the Jews Religion. She is prepared and fitted under that *Pedagogie*. Pious Education under the publick Worship hath accommodated her, and so she is more easily and speedily converted. *Cor aperuit*; one Sermon of St. Paul opened her heart presently. The being born and trained up within the Compass and means of Grace, doth facilitate and dispose us to a more speedy conversion. That's the first kind of Auditors: *Lydia religiosa*. Serm. I.

Secondly, Here is *Commentariensis*, the Gaoler, a prophane, barbarous Man, a savage torturer of the Apostles. And to fit and prepare him for conversion, here is a mighty earthquake; the very foundations of the Prison are shaken, himself struck with horror and amazement, he trembles, despairs, is ready to fordo himself; and then, at last, is recovered out of the very jaws of Hell. *Titio ereptus*, a brand catch'd out of the fire, and so brought to conversion.

Prophane, barbarous Men, are not usually saved without terrour and affrightment. As *Chrysostom* alluding to Paul's threatning of *Elymas*, *Thou shalt be blind for a time*: "Mark, saith the Father, he lays the same Plaister to *Elymas*, that cured himself. First he was struck with blindness and horror, that fitted him for a saving conversion. Obstinate, obdurate, barbarous Sinners, they are not only dead in sins and trespasses; but buried in a Sepulchre hewn out of a rock, thundering and earthquakes must quicken and arouse them.

Religious *Lydia*, a gentle still voice, one word of St. Paul melts her heart. *O virtus Sermonis! quasi quiddam intra, ut hamus, aut uncinus trahit*: there was a secret attractive power in one word of St. Paul; Believe in the Lord, perswades her presently. I, but thou must sharpen thy wedges, and redouble thy blows to split in sunder the knotty hardness of this wretched Goaler. *Chordæ in cithara uno quidem plectro, sed non uno impulsu sunt feriendæ*, saith *Gregory*. It was the same hand, but not a like stroke, converted both of them. And that's a second kind of Auditors, a prophane Goaler.

Thirdly, Here are *Cives avari, & ambitiosi*, Ver. 19. A third sort of Auditors is the main body of the City, the Magistrates and Citizens, men set upon gain and ambition; they reject St. Paul, nay, oppose him, nay, they imprison and persecute him.

I. The Magistrates, they have their plea against him, *ritus & consuetudines*, Ver. 21 breach of customs and ancient orders, that enrages them. This new Gospel breeds nothing but new-fangledness and sedition, that's their objection. And then,

II. The Citizens, they put in their Plea, *Spes lucri*, Verse 19. the hope of gain is gone; a servant possessed with a gainful and profitable Devil, that brought much advantage to her Masters (suppose a cunning, over-reaching Apprentice or Factour) the casting out of that Devil, the conversion of such a servant, it stirs up persecution. *Nec Deo, nec Dæmoni credunt*, saith *Chrysostom*. Though God authorize Paul, and the Devil give testimony to him, *These are the servants of the most high God*, yet they regard neither God nor the Devil, but Covetousness and Ambition. Oh! this is a dumb and a deaf Devil, there is no charming of it.

And thus you have a short view of those three varieties of St. Paul's Auditors; Devout *Lydia* presently saved by a gentle perswasion; a barbarous Goaler wrought upon by fear and astonishment, and driven to Conversion; but covetous and ambitious Worldlings, the loss of gain, and breaking of customs, enrages them to malicious persecution.

Who can order or restrain, the breathings of God's Spirit? The Doctors of the Jews condemn Paul, and despise him; *Lydia*, a Disciple of theirs, listens and believes him. Again, Civil men, Citizens and Magistrates reject and persecute him; a savage Goaler, he trembles and believes him. An Apostle betrays Christ, an Harlot anoints him. The Emperour imprisons Paul and beheads him, when his Ganymede and his Concubine hear and obey him. The Tribunals of Magistrates, the Temple of Justice is now turned into a Den of Thieves; and the Prison, the sink of Villany, is consecrate to a Temple. *Domus Diaboli carcer, in qua familiam suam continet*, saith *Tertullian*: *Sed vos ideo in carcerem venistis, ut illum in domo sua conculcetis*. Being in bonds, see how he lays siege to this hold of Satan: The power of his Ministry breaks through all resistances; as the Father sweetly

Serm I. applies the Prophet *Iſaiah's* words, *The gates of Braſs ſhall open unto him, and the bars of Iron ſhall be broken in ſunder* by a ſtrange engine, with ſinging of *Pſalms*, like the ſiege of *Jericho*, with the blowing of *Trumpets*. “*Strange, ſaith a Father, Myſteria magis putantur conſummare, quàm bella*; Religious Ceremonies, not warlike Inſtruments, wrought this victory.

Purpoſely *Paul* becomes a Priſoner, that he might ſubdue Satan in his own fortreſs. As *Chryſoſtome* obſerves, that it was a ſpecial Providence, that *Paul* ſhould be ſent to *Rome* in bonds, becauſe the *Jews* were lanithed and forbid the City. As a free-man he could not, but his chains and imprifonment were his advantage to convert the *Romans*; he imitates his Maſter. *Chriſtus in Cruce latronem ex vulnere baptizavit*; the Croſs was a fit place to convert a Thief, and his blood a convenient Laver to baptize a Murtherer: So here, *St. Paul's* ſtripes and imprifonment are his fitteſt opportunity to convert this Gaoler.

In whoſe converſion and new-birth, three things offer themſelves as moſt obſervable.

1. *Antecedentia converſionis*; an earth-quake, and by it fear and aſtoniſhment; and thoſe are *dolores ante partum*, the pains and anguiſhes before his Birth.

2. *Converſio ipſa*; *Paul's* preaching, his believing, and baptizing; that's *partus ipſe*, the new-birth it ſelf.

3. *Conſequentia converſionis*; he rejoyced, *He waſhed their ſtripes*, he fed and embraced them; and that's *gaudium poſt partum*, the joyful conſequence of his Regeneration.

My Text contains one clauſe and member of this latter part, *He waſhed their ſtripes*. A mean, contemptible action in ordinary eſteem, and yet valuable in God's account, and put upon record for eternal memory. “How many Queens are gotten, ſaith the Father, when poor *Prifcilla*, for reſreſhing of *Paul*, hath an honourable remembrance! The vain munificence of many Kings and Judges is buried in oblivion, whereas this poor charity of the Gaoler ſtands for ever regiſtred.

It was the Gaoler and his wife, as *Chryſoſtome* conceits it, whom by the name of *Eudias* and *Syntiche*, *St. Paul* enrolls in the book of life, *Phil. iv. 2. Whereſoever this Goſpel ſhall be preached*, ſaith our Saviour: See the meaneſt relief done to Chriſt, and his members, hath a Patent of eternity. A little Manna, but a vaniſhing Meteor, lay it up in the Ark, it never putrifies. The cheapeſt Alms to Chriſt and his Church, the memory of it ſhall never be abolith'd. *Neque actionis vilitas, neque perſonæ indignitas, neque loci obſcuritas*, ſaith the Father, *Neither the meanneſs of the action, nor the wileſneſs of the perſon, nor the baſeneſs of the place, ſhall ever obſcure it.*

For the purpoſe of the Words, conceive them to be an holy action of this Convert, following upon, and ſo manifeſting and expreſſing the truth of his Converſion. A few words, a ſmall action in appearance, and yet a powerful evidence of his new-birth. This ſmall work, dipt and colour'd in the blood of *Paul*, appears like that red thread on the hand of the new-born child, as a teſtimony of his birth-right. And ſtands here upon record, and hangs like *Rahab's* ſcarlet thread, faſtned on his houſe as a pledge of his ſalvation. “Indeed, as *Baſil* ſpeaks, 'tis his firſt ſacrifice of thanks “he offers for his converſion; a ſacrifice *ἡ δὴ πῦρ, ἀλλὰ δὴ κρύως ἀποκαρπόμενον*, an whole burnt offering, and yet not by fire, but by water kindled and enflamed.

That we may fully conceive, how this waſhing of their ſtripes doth evidence, and demonſtrate the truth of his converſion, pleaſe you to take notice of it in theſe following conſiderations; all which we will reduce to theſe two diſtinct reſpects;

Firſt, Conceive this action of his, *reſpectu principii à quo*, in reſpect of his perſon, that doth exerciſe and perform it: as it ariſes from him and is his action, *He waſhed them*.

Secondly, *Reſpectu objecti, circa quod*; as it reſpects the Apoſtles, towards whom he performs it, *He waſhed their ſtripes*.

Firſt take a view of it *reſpectu principii*, in reſpect of the Agent, that acts and performs it; as it was a work of this new Convert.

For more full conceiving and underſtanding of it, obſerve, That in the firſt calling or converſion of a ſinner, there are three powerful ſeeds and principles of Grace wrought into his heart: The

First Is *principium fidei*, a Principle and seed of Faith.

Second Is *principium pœnitentiæ*, a Principle of Repentance.

Third Is *principium renovationis*, a Principle and seed of new life and Renovation. And from these three seeds and Principles of Conversion, we will deduce the nature and original of this Convert's Action.

First, *Respectu fidei*; Look first upon him, as a man quickned and enliven'd with a Principle of Faith; and then conceive this action of his as 'tis *opus fidei*, a fruit of his Faith. So soon as he believed, presently the same hour *he washed their stripes*. And the Observation hence is briefly thus much:

That a true Believer is readily and presently a religious worker. Faith, 'tis no still, silent, contemplative Virtue; but 'tis active and operative, puts forth it self into all acts of Piety. 'Tis not a Frontlet to thine eyes only in Illumination, but 'tis a Tablet on thine hands for employment and action. The work of Faith, and labour of Love, St. Paul unites them, and they are never asunder; and that upon a threefold ground.

I. *Ratione veritatis fidei*; is not thy Faith active and operative? 'tis no true Faith 'tis but fained and counterfeit.

II. *Ratione usus fidei*; without this action and exercise, 'tis vain and unprofitable.

III. *Ratione acceptationis fidei*; except thy Faith be fruitful and effectual, 'tis no way acceptable.

I. *Ratione veritatis*. The very life and being of Faith makes it naturally working. *Impetu quodam, & impulsu erumpunt bona opera*, saith Luther excellently. Doest thou believe? Good works do naturally and powerfully break out. They are called the fruits of Faith; and fruits you know naturally blossom and spring: 'Tis dead at the root, that's barren and fruitless. As at the beginning the LORD created trees with fruit on them, not a trunk, or a stock, but flourishing and abundant; so in our new creation, the Tree of Faith, 'tis presently furnished with the fruit of Piety. See how suddenly, in this Convert, the Seed-time, and the Spring, and Harvest do follow each other. *Sementis heri, hodierna messis*, saith Chrysostom of his Auditours, *simul & semen recipit, & aristam exhibet; non est natura, quæ cunctatur, sed gratia, quæ accelerat*. The seed, the blade, the ripe-corn, and all in an instant. A lively Faith, it longs to be working, like St. John's Converts, seeks employment presently, *What shall I do?* Deny it working, you deprive it of being; like the Soul, it stays no longer in the body, than it may act and quicken it; hinder the actions of life, it forsakes us presently. The speech of Rachel, 'tis the voice of Faith, *Give me Children, or I die*. 'Tis earnest for conception, and as ready for delivery, like the Hebrew women, strong to bring forth, and rejoicing to see her first-born, and calls him *Gad*, a Company comes.

It abhors those unkindly conceptions, that are never brought forth, but at the death of the Mother; they must have *carnifices obstetrices*, as Tertullian speaks, and *testamentariam prolem*; nothing, but their death, can bring forth their good deeds. No, a true Faith no sooner lives, but is stirring presently; as it is able, shews it self in some work or word, that may demonstrate the truth of its being. The Thief on the Cross could do nothing, but because he believed, therefore he spake in confession and exhortation. If the child be still-born, we give it for dead; if it cries, sends forth any voice, there is life in it, and hope of it. O, let thine heart by Faith be bathed and warmed in the blood of Christ, and thou mayst as well keep the fire from burning, and the Sun from shining, and the heavens from moving, as true Faith from working. *Flammæ suas intra pectus cohibere non potest*, saith the Father; it cannot keep close this fire in the heart; enforces good deeds upon all that comes near it: Like Lydia here, *If you have counted me faithful, enter into mine house*; *ὡς πιστὸν εὐαγγελίζουσαν*, she is violently importunate. This is natural and necessary, saith St. Augustine, *Qui aliud credit, aliud sperat, aliud amat, necesse est, ut aliter vivat*. Thy Faith will naturally flow forth into action. And that's the first ground of it, *ratione veritatis*, 'tis no true faith, except it be operative.

II. *Ratione usus*; Except thy Faith be lively and working, 'tis an unuseful Faith, altogether unprofitable. *Τὶ τὸ ἔργον*, saith St. James: What doth an idle conceit, and notion of Faith profit, or advantage thee, *if thou have no works? Sine bonis*

Serm. I. *operibus nihil sibi per fidei supercilium*, saith *Salvian*, it procures thee nothing. *Justificat, purgat, salvat*, the three proper employments of Faith, and the fruitless Faith performs none of them.

1. *Non salvat*; that St. *James* assures thee of, *Epap. ii. 14.* *It cannot save him.* The working Faith, though it do not purchase Heaven, yet it effectually procures it: *Non vendit meritis, sed dabit laboribus*; it abhors works as merits, embraces them as means. It runs into neither extremity that Popery would place it in: *Aut malis operibus, Diabolum referre, aut bonis operibus Deum esse*, as *Luther* and *pake* worthily.

2. *Non purgat*; 'Tis not light, but heat that purges and purifies; not a contemplative notion swimming in the brain, but as *Oecumenius* describes it, 'tis *consecutio ex affectu procedens*, a devoted affection seated in the heart. *Nay*:

3. *Non justificat*; 'Tis only the working Faith, that obtains thy pardon: in this case though Faith be actually destitute, yet 'tis such a Faith as will be industrious. God gives Grace unto it, as to a poor Beggar, but not as to a lazy one; and Faith receives it with an empty hand, but not with an idle one. A withered hand, as it cannot work, so it cannot stretch out it self to receive an Alms. And an enervated Faith, as it cannot put forth the hands in the works of Piety, so neither is it able to lift up its hands to sue for Mercy. As good no Faith, as never the better for it. *Fides infelix bonum, si infructuosum; malo nullam fidem, quam vanam; quid prodest esse, quod non prodest?* It is a bootless Faith, if it be a fruitless Faith, saith *Tertullian* sweetly.

II. *Ratione acceptationis*: Except thy Faith be active and operative, 'tis no way acceptable. In this case, as thine outward services without inward Faith, like the Emperour's excors sacrifice, his Sacrifice that had no heart in it, are prodigious and loathsome; so the inwards of Faith, without the body and substance of Works, are offals and refuse. "God, saith *Gregory*, requires not only *pectus fidei*, but *armum dextrum*; not only the shake-breast of Faith, but the heave-shoulder and arm "of Obedience: Before thou believest, God freely forgives thee even all thine evil works; but, when thou believest, he strictly exacts the performance of good. *Pecatoribus principalem sortem remittit*, saith the Father, *à justis etiam usuras exigit*. In thy conversion, he forgives the main stock and forfeiture; but, after thy conversion, he strictly requires both use and principal. And that's a third enforcement of my Observation, as this action of the Gaoler arises from the Principle of Conversion: the seed of Faith, 'tis *opus fidei*; a true Believer is cheerfully and readily a Religious worker.

Conceive this action of *Washing their stripes*;

Secondly, *Respectu principii pœnitentiæ*, as arising from a second seed of Grace wrought in conversion, the principle of Repentance. Before his Conversion, he used them cruelly, whipt and lashed the bodies of these Saints, thrusts them into a Dungeon, fastens them in the Stocks, lays chains and bolts on them; now, that he is converted and brought to Repentance, he is glad to wash and bathe their bodies, that he tortured; now he enlarges them, feeds, and refreshes them. And the Observation from hence is thus much:

Repentance, it makes us undo all that we did before. It enforces us to befool our selves, look back upon all our actions with grief and sorrow; makes us wish and desire, we had never committed them. How did this Gaoler now smite on his thigh, as the Prophet speaks? How did he question with himself, and upbraid his folly, *What have I done?* This is the nature and property of true Repentance, 'tis *conatus infectum reddendi quod factum est*, as some School-men define it, an undoing of our former deeds. *Tūc tu corpeboria*, as St. *Basil* expresses it; a retraction, review, and reversing of all our former life. It deals with our sins, as *Moses* with the Calf that the *Israelites* made, *He took their sin, the sin that they made, and he brake it in pieces, and ground it to dust, and cast it into the water, and made them drink the very powder of it*: So Repentance, it takes all thy former sins, and by contrition grinds them to powder, and then mingles it with the tears of sorrow, and makes us drink and suck up the dregs of it. *Oh! what fruit have you of those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* saith Repentance to thee, when thou considerest thy former errors; here is the success and profit of all your sinning.

If

If thou beest desperate, run on, spare not, purchase and treasure up wrath to thy self; but if thou meanest ever to be saved, thou must rip up and unravel thy whole life again; thou must go over with sorrow and vexation, all those wanderings and turnings of thy former transgressions. Thou that didst carry out the seed of sin, and wentest out rejoicing, shalt bring back thy sheaves and burdens of sorrow, and return home weeping.

Oh then! in the beginning of thy life, when thou first settest out, aim right and advisedly, lest at the long run thou be fool thy self. Learn this Lesson ye wise fore-plotters of what you undertake, that account it your wisdom in all other business not to be mistaken; that judge it a point of folly to excuse your selves with a *Non Putavi*. Happy be you that have your action in your hand, and may take a true level. This is the fore-counsel of Repentance to thee. It persuades and forewarns, as St. Paul did the Mariners, *Act. xxvii. Undertake not this desperate voyage, it will be much damage of your goods and lives*. But if thou wilt on for all this warning, then comes Repentance with an after-counsel, as the same St. Paul, *Sirs, you should have been advised by me, and so you should not have gained this harm and loss*.

What madness is this then, to dare to sin upon presumption of after Repentance? Thou wilt sin, because thou shalt repent again; that is, *I will do it, because I must do it*: Thou wilt tie knots with thy fingers, that thou must be forced to untie with thy teeth: Thou wilt swallow down that for a little pleasure, and delight of thy Palate, which if it prove not thy bane, thou must vomit up again with the rending of thy bowels; Thou wilt drive and rivet in these nails, because thou must toil to pull them out again: Thou wilt stab and wound thy self, because with torture and anguish, thou must cure thy self again: Thou wilt hate and persecute a Christian, scourge and tear the body of St. Paul; Why, if ever thou beest saved, thou must be glad to bathe and cure those wounds and stripes, to kiss those feet, and wash with thy tears, which before thou hast fastened in the Stocks, and loaded with fetters: And that's the second Observation, as this action of the Gaoler arises from the second principle of Grace, the seed of Repentance; he washes now, where he wounded before: *Repentance makes us undo what we did before*.

Consider this action of the Gaoler in *washing their stripes*, as arising from, Thirdly, A third Principle of Grace wrought in conversion, and that's *Principium novæ vitæ*, or *renovationis*, as it springs from a seed and principle of Renovation. And so 'tis an evidence and fruit of the changing and reforming his former life, and that in three several considerations:

1. It is an evidence of Renovation, *respectu naturæ, & dispositionis*. This washing and cherishing the Apostles, it evidences the renewing and changing of his Nature and former disposition. Before his Calling and Conversion, he was a cruel, barbarous, hard-hearted man, a tormenter of the Apostles: Now, that the Spirit of God hath seized upon him, and entered into him, see, he is presently become a meek, a merciful, tender-hearted compassionate man, he washes and bathes their stripes, he feeds and refreshes them. And from hence take notice of this Observation:

That Grace and Religion, it mollifies, intenerates, it changes and sweetens the prophaneſt Natures, and most barbarous Dispositions. This Gaoler, before a savage Persecutour, like the *Dæmoniack* in the Gospel, exceeding fierce, no man could tame him, now, behold him dispossessed of his fury, he sits at Christ's feet peaceable and gentle.

Religion, it persuades us, and woos us in St. Paul's Language, *Coloss. iii. 12. Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, meekness*. Behold this Gaoler by his Calling and Baptism, transformed into the Similitude of Christ at his Baptism, to shew the meekness that Christianity works in us, *Agnum demonstravit Columba*, he becomes a Lamb, and a Dove rests upon him. *Quod Agnus in Animalibus, hoc Columba in Avibus, summa utriusque innocentia, summa mansuetudo, summa simplicitas*. Before his Conversion, he was a Tyger and Vulture, now Grace makes him as a Lamb and a Dove.

When *Elisba* anointed *Hazeel*, the Prophet wept to foresee his barbarous disposition,

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on, *Thou shalt rip up the Bellies of the Women with Child.* Now Paul baptizes this Gaoler, how did it joy him to see! *Oh, thou shalt wash the Saints, comfort and refresh them.* O! the power of God's mercy and grace, to pardon, and purge, and transform such a Sinner. *Mille accusationes, mille carnisces, ad nutum Regis omnes dimittuntur,* all presently abolished. *Si dixero adultero, Nolo, ut adulter sit; verba statim vertuntur in opera,* saith St. Chrysostom: One word of Christ transforms him presently. Thus St. Paul, before his Conversion a bloody Persecutor, he made havock of the Church; Grace makes him presently a most compassionate Preacher. This makes Bernard admire the effectual power of God's grace in St. Paul's Conversion, *O magnitudinem misericordiae! O efficaciam gratiae!* that Mercy would, and Grace could alter and mollifie such a barbarous Sinner!

This is the admirable power of Religion, altering and changing us above all other means. Education, Laws, Magistrates, may suppress for a time; but 'tis Grace alone, that can throughly and effectually turn and transform us. Like the Woman with the bloody Issue, thou mayst spend all upon Physicians, civil and moral means, to subdue thy Nature, and be little the better; the least touch of the hem of Christ's garment will convey Grace unto thee, and cure thee presently. Lord (saith the poor man in the Gospel) *I brought my Son to thy Disciples, but they could not help me:* inferior means could not prevail: *Bring him to me,* saith Christ; he cast out the Devil with power and authority: *Never enter into this man more:* Thou art effectually converted, and shalt never relapse again. Thus Chrysostom upon those words of St. Paul, *He that purges himself, shall be a vessel of honour,* observes, That "All other Disciplines and Institutions of Morality, work only an outward reformation in appearance; Religion alters the heart, and soul, and very nature of man. As Art, saith he, can only alter the outward Figure and fashion of things, it cannot transform the Substance of them; it may alter the Figure of Iron, it cannot turn it into a richer Metal: *Gratia ferreum vas acceptum reddit aureum,* saith he, it turns a Vessel of Iron into pure Gold.

The Church, and saving Grace in it, in this respect, excels even Paradise it self. *In illa paradiso,* saith the Father, *unaquaque arbor in suo permanet statu;* the soil, it did not alter the kind of what was planted in it: But in the Paradise of the Church, *Si invenero labruscam, vitem efficiam; si invenero Oleastrum, Olivam efficiam:* Wild Gourds and Brambles, by Grace are turned into wholesome and fruitful Trees. There Grapes shall grow from Thorns, and Figs from Thistles. In that Paradise Adam discern'd the nature of Beasts, that came into him, and so he named them, he did not change them: In this Paradise of the Church, let a cruel Lyon come to Christ, he will call him, and make him a meek Lamb. Noah's Ark, saith the Father, *animalia recepit, & animalia conservavit;* what Creatures it received, the same it kept them. *Introivit Accipiter, & exivit Accipiter;* a Vulture went in, and it came out a Vulture: *Ecclesia vero, animalia recipiens, eadem transformat; introivit Accipiter, exit Columba; introivit Lupus, exit Ovis.* Let an unclean Beast enter into the Church, it shall go out clean; let it enter a Wolf, it comes out a Lamb. The Gospel shall turn Swords into Plough-shares, Spears into Pruning hooks, Isai. iv. that is, saith Tertulian, *Feros, & saevos animos in probos, & bonae frugis operarios:* It shall turn instruments of cruelty into dispositions of mercy. Out of the Devourer comes meat and hony, was Sampson's Riddle: *ἀπὸ ἐσθίου ὁ βρώσις καὶ γλυκὺν, ἀπὸ μισανθρώπου φιλανθρώπινα,* saith Basil; the Devourer gives honey, that is, inhumanity and Cruelty, by Grace and Religion, shall be turned into Pity. And Augustine alludes to the same Riddle. *In ore Leonis favius extractus;* that is, saith he, *persecutores Ecclesiae dulcedine Evangelica imbuuntur:* The devouring Lyon shall bring hony in his mouth; the Church's cruel persecutors shall by the Gospel be made affectionate foster-fathers. This is the proper and peculiar work of Religion, to correct and sweeten the most desperate natures.

Thus the Primitive Fathers undertook the performance of those desperate cures. 'Twas the voice of Religion in their times, "Hast thou an unchaste Wife? Bring her to Religion, 'twill make her temperate: Hast thou an undutiful Child? bring him to Religion, 'twill make him obedient: Hast thou an unfaithful Servant? it will teach

"teach him fidelity. Let *Onesimus*, a pilferer and runagate, listen to St. Paul, he returns him to his Master faithful and serviceable. Monsters of sin, by the power of this, have been converted into Miracles of Virtue. The *Persians*, saith *Chrysostome*, that professed *Incest*, now by Religion practise Virginitie. *Britanni humanis vescabantur carnibus, nunc jejuniis reficiunt animas suas*; they, that savagely fed upon other mens flesh, now by fasting do mortifie their own.

This is the main Testimony to warrant and authorize the truth of Religion. "In disputes with Heathen and Infidels, we call for no Miracles from Heaven, saith the Father. *Quin homines proferimus antea bestiis truciore, Angelorum nunc imitatores effectos*. We warrant our Faith, not by working of wonders; but by converting of sinners, *cænum in unguentum mutando*, by changing filthiness into holiness, and *dæmones in Angelos*, by turning incarnate Devils into mortal Angels. This makes profane men and Infidels, stand and admire the Ministers of the Gospel. They that can tame Lyons, and lead about Elephants, how are they wondred at? How much more wonderful is the Gospel of Grace, that can tame and subdue the most barbarous Dispositions? *Si quis senescenti iuventutem restituat*, saith he, *quantum æstimamus*? If one could make an old, decrepit man, young and fresh again, and streighten a crooked, distorted body; how would men flock to him? Religion is more powerful; it turns not age into youth; but rottenness and corruption into holiness and integrity. Nay, this convicts the Devil himself, enforces him to believe and confess our Ministry. The Conversion of a barbarous sinner confounds him more, than the working of a wonder. When he sees *tot in homine mortis opera diruta, tot titulos damnationis repente erasos*, saith *Tertullian*; it astonishes him to see a child of perdition by grace translated to an heir of Salvation.

Oh, saith St. *Chrysostome*, these are the chief wonders of Religion, *Narrabo mirabilia tua; quæ mirabilia? Quod facias de superbo humilem, de adultero castum, de iracundo mansuetum*. When thou seest a Proud man made humble, an Adulterer chaste, an Usurer bountiful, a Cruel man merciful; thou mayst well say, *Hæc est mutatio dextræ Excelsi*; This is the finger of God, the wonder of Religion.

And that's my first Observation: As it is a fruit of his Renovation, *respectu naturæ, & dispositionis*; Religion alters and mollifies the most prophane nature; an heard-hearted Tormenter is presently become a merciful comforter.

II. It is *opus reformationis*; it arises from the seed and principle of Renovation, *respectu particularis peccati*, in respect of his particular actual fault; of which he was now in present Commission. He was even now exercising his barbarous cruelty towards the Apostles; and in this sin the hand of God now finds him, and the guilt of this sin, the mercy of God now pardons him; and therefore of all other sins, he will beware of this sin, presently puts himself into the practice of the contrary Virtue. Observe,

A true Convert, though he resolves of a general reformation, yet, above all others, he will have a special eye at that sin, which was the cause of his greatest ruin, and which God made the occasion of his rising, and conversion, Thou art made whole, sin no more; generaliter dictum, specialiter sapit, as *Tertullian* speaks: it aims specially at some former sin, that brought him to misery. As a man recovered from a dangerous sickness, he carefully uses a general good diet; but especially desires preservatives, and antidotes against the disease, he was lately cured of. I surfeited of this meat, this proved my bane, and he knows relapses to be dangerous and deadly. A Captain is careful to strengthen every corner of his Castle; but that place, where the Enemy brake in before, shall have a double watch, that's fortified especially.

See how St. *Paul* sticks at that one sin of his, *I was a persecutor*, it was a sin was long since pardoned him, he might look upon that sin now without horror, as *Augustine* speaks: I, but for detestation and prevention, he could never forget it. *Deleta revocat*, saith *Chrysostom* of him, he recalls this special sin past and forgiven, to strengthen himself against a second commission. *Non vult iterum divinæ misericordiæ oneri esse*, as *Tertullian* speaks of a true Penitent, he will not be burdensome again to the grace of God, again to deliver him from so great a danger. And therefore makes this special sin the cause and opportunity, to reform all other

Serm. I. other sin. As in catching and taming of wild beasts ('tis *Chrysestom's* similitude) if you can lay hold upon the darling young-one, the old one will soon be taken and subdued; so if thou mortifie thy special darling sin, the dam and old one, nay, the whole breed of sins will be destroyed presently.

A strong apprehension and detestation of this one sin, it will make thee confess all other sins with it; as a strong striking one string will make the other strings of an Instrument give their sound also. This is *Bernard's* rule and caveat of Repentance. Though thou must forsake whatsoever sin, *Ea tamen specialiter horreas, que specialiter appetebas*, saith he, thy special sin, which was thy main ruine, take heed that works thee not a second mischief.

See the practice of this Caveat in those two famous Penitents, in the Old and New Testament, *David* and *St. Peter*.

I. *David* commits Adultery, compasses and contrives it with deliberate Murder. *Magnum peccatum, magna Misericordia.* A great sin committed, much mercy that pardoned it. Observe how shie and watchful he is of yielding to any lust, that touches and borders upon the suspicion of Murder. He longs to taste of the Waters of *Bethlehem*, and yet checks himself, and abstains, because it did but hazard the blood of his Captains; Oh! 'tis the price of blood, I will not taste of it. Before he yielded to an adulterous lusting, now he abstains from a natural longing; there is shed the blood of his servant, now his heart smites him for venturing and hazarding the blood of his subjects. Oh! he remembers his former sin, he durst not come near the least occasion of it.

2. *St. Peter* in the New Testament, sins in a presumptuous comparing and preferring himself before his fellow-Apostles; *Though all should forsake thee, yet I will not*; he is stronger than all of them, and loves Christ better. You know the success, he fell foully. Observe how watchful he is, lest he be surprized with the like temptation. *Simon, lovest thou me, more than these?* Now he is put upon the comparison, yet he dares not make it: *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* Comparisons were dangerous to him, he dares not adventure them.

This is the holy wisdom, that Repentance teacheth thee. *Naufragium fit stabilior portus*, saith the Father, he makes that a Sea-mark or Haven, where he suffered shipwrack. His godly sorrow begets this special care and revenge in him; he mainly avoids that particular sin, wherein God's hand found him, puts himself speedily and earnestly to the practice of the contrary Duty. And that's the second Observation, as it is a work of Reformation *respectu particularis peccati*; of that sin whereof he was now in actual commission.

III. 'Tis *opus Reformationis*; 'tis a fruit arising from the seed of Renovation, *respectu particularis vocationis*; in respect of his private calling and profession. He is a Gaoler, and they, you know, are usually merciless, hard-hearted men. Now he is converted, he reforms the abuses of his calling, uses his Prisoners mercifully, and with much pity. He contents not himself to hear *Paul* preach, to believe, to be baptized, and so rests in the common duties of Christianity; but shews the truth and power of his Conversion in his private personal calling and profession. He is not only a good Christian, but a good Gaoler, hath care of his Prisoners; a good Father and Master, all his house must be taught and baptized. Observe,

The Truth of Conversion will evidence it self in the ordering and reforming of our personal Calling. Religion, 'tis not a matter meerly of publick and common profession, dwells not in Churches and Temples only, but it will enter into thine house, bids it self home to thee; as Christ to *Zacheus*, *Come, I must lodge in thine house*, have access and sway in all thine employments.

The Law of God was not to be wrote on the doors of the Temple, but upon the posts of thine own doors, and thou to meditate upon it; not only going to the Church, but in thine field, in thine house, with thy Children, in all the turnings of thy life and calling. It answers, as *John Baptist* to Souldiers and Publicans, *Defraud no man, oppress no man.* Like *St. Paul*, concluding the highest points of Christian Religion with prescriptions of personal Duties to Masters and Servants, Parents and Children. The understanding and observing of which, saith one, is the best Commentary upon the higher mysteries of all *Paul's* Epistles.

How

How many be there, like the man in the Gospel, that offer to follow Christ wheresoever he goes, in a continual frequenting of the publick worship? No, saith Christ, *Go home to thine house, and there shew what God hath done to thee.* Let thy shop, and thy trading, and thy personal employments witness and evidence the power of thy Religion. Frequenting of Sermons, and solemn Service; alas! 'tis a cheap and easie performance of Piety and Devotion. They that can relinquish unlawful gains, though it cost them dear, that can cut off their right hand, though it bring in their living, they shew the power of Grace and Religion. Those in the Acts, that burnt and abandoned their unlawful books, to the joys of thousands, see what an honourable testimony the Spirit gives them of a sound Conversion, *So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed;* in them had the Gospel its perfect work.

Without this, all your outward priviledges are but empty titles. What is the honour and renown of this famous City? *Hæc nostræ civitatis laus* (saith he of his *Constantinople*) *non quod Senatum habeat, aut Consules, aut mercium copiam:* This is the glory of your City, not to be the Seat of the Empire, and Mart of the World: *sed quod populum habeat audiendi studiosum, templa Dei referta, Ecclesias crescentes:* Your full Churches and Congregations are the beauty of your City. But yet rest not there: you must bring home some of this Religion to your private dwellings and professions, lest, in this sense also, you make the Travellers censure prove too true of you: The Churches and Publick places of *London*, are stately and magnificent, but their private dwellings and houses are nothing answerable. Their Temples and Oratories are full of devotion, but their shops and counting-houses are utterly void of it.

Tyrus, that famous City, when she shall be converted, the Prophet foretells not of Churches and Temples, but that her Trading and Dealing shall be sanctified and holy, her occupying and merchandize shall be holy to the LORD, saith the Prophet *Isaiah*.

I meddle not with the secrets of your Trading and gaining, and yet you must not exclude Divinity and Religion from over-ruling your Conscience in your personal callings, and secular affairs. Our Saviour that would not be a Judge, or divider of Estates, yet interposes his Doctrine, *Beware of Covetousness.* St. Paul tells us, 'tis a point of Divinity, nay a great Mystery in Religion, to know how to be wealthy. *Μεμύνηται, I have learned the mystery to abound,* Philip. iv. 12. You will grant, there be Mysteries of Doctrine and Faith; and you would be loth, not to have insight into the highest of them. Paul tells you here, there is a great mystery in honest thriving and gaining, which I fear many a Crafts-man amongst you is utterly ignorant of. Those whose very Trades are sins, that are *ex officio peccatores*, as the Father terms them, oppressing Userers, Brokers, and the like rabblement of City-thieves, more execrable and odious in St. Chrysostom's judgment, than high-way Robbers, what evidence can they possibly have of a sound Conversion? They that will not reform one abuse in their Trading, how will they forsake all for Religion? *Parentes, conjuges, liberi propter Deum relinquendi,* saith Tertullian, *de artibus, & negotiationibus, & possessionibus, etiam Liberorum causa dubitas?* Religion will make thee forsake Wife and Children; can it not win thee from a sinful profession?

I, But it brings in my living: How shall I shift?

Oh, saith a Father, *Indigna vox Christiano;* 'tis an unworthy Question for a Christian to ask, *How shall I live?* *Fides non respicit vitam, multo minus victum;* his life is not dear to him, much less his living. Not one that Christ called to forsake Trades and Professions, did ever answer him, *Non habeo quod vivam,* I must not give over my thriving and gaining. They not only reformed, but relinquished their Trades when Christ required it. Religion, it naturally and readily expresses it self at least in the over-ruling and ordering of our Secular Employments. That's the third Observation, as it is a work of Reformation, in respect of his private calling and profession.

Hitherto we have considered this action of the Gaoler, *Respectu principii, à quo oritur,* as it was an action of a man believing, repenting, and as a man reformed;

I. In his nature and disposition.

II. In his particular sinful action.

III. And lastly, in his calling and profession. But,

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Secondly,

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Secondly, Take notice of it *respectu objecti circa quod versatur*, as it respects and passes upon these men, to whom he performed it; *He washed their stripes.*

And so the divers considerations of the object will specify the nature of the act, and fruit of Conversion.

First, Then generally and briefly conceive them as *Proximi*, as Men, Brethren, and Neighbours, in that common reference, so 'tis *Actus Charitatis*, an act of Charity. And then observe;

The truth of Conversion will express it self in the works of love to our Neighbours and Brethren. This is the main evidence of our New-birth. *Dilectio, summum fidei Sacramentum, Christiani nominis Thesaurus*, saith *Tertullian*. 'Tis the seal and assurance of a right-bred Faith. And, *non dubitet se amari, qui amat*, saith *Bernard*. Is thine heart enlarged in love to thy Brethren? thou needest not question God's love to thee. The washing and anointing Christ's feet, was an assurance to *Mary* of pardon and peace: *Her sins are forgiven her, for she loved much.* So this Gabeler, washing and cherishing the members of Christ, hath an undoubted testimony, that himself is accepted.

Oh! the apprehension of God's love to us naturally enforces our love to his children. *If God so loved us, we ought to love one another*, saith *St. John*. The inference, one would think, should rather have been, *We ought to love him again.* True, but he sets over this love, that is due to himself, to the use of our Brethren;

I. *In Signum amoris*; 'Tis the best sign and proof of our love, if we love our Brethren. Who doth not boast of his love to God? 'Tis every man's profession, and we cannot convert them. Bring them to this tryal, *Dost thou love him that is begotten of God*; wheresoever thou seest his Image and Similitude? *By this ye are known to be my Disciples, if ye love one another.* "Observe, saith *Chrysostom*, 'tis "not working of miracles, casting out Devils; but love to our Brethren, that's the "infallible proof of being a true Disciple. *See how they love one another*; it was the "mark, by which Heathens pointed out the Christians in *Tertullian's* Age. 'Tis "*Signum amoris*.

II. *In fructum amoris*; God sets over this love to our Brethren; that they might receive the fruit and improvement of it. The benefit of our love, it cannot reach to him; his self-sufficiency admits no addition from our poor charity; he makes our Brethren the receivers of it. As Presents to a King are but acknowledgments of homage to him, the profit and benefit is shared by his followers. *David*, he could not do kindness to *Jonathan* himself; but yet he enquires, *Is there any of Jonathan's stock alive, that I may shew kindness to?* If *Naaman* can fasten no gift on *Elisha*, yet the children of the Prophets, and his servant *Gebazi*, shall have what they will of him. 'Tis *fructus amoris*.

III. *In augmentum amoris*; This love to our Brethren, it multiplies, and strengthens, and encreases our love to God. That's hearty love, that rests not upon the party, whom we chiefly affect, but enlarges it self to his children, and followers, and all that belongs to him. *Charitas nescit angulum, not amat proprium, servire desiderat necessitatibus omnium.* It takes advantages of all relations, past and to come; 'tis *quoddam æternitatis exemplar*, as he speaks of Faith, *præteritos, præsentis, futuros vastissimo quodam sinu comprehendit*: lays hold of all, embraces all, that belongs to his Saviour. And that's the first Consideration of it, as they are *Proximi*, and so this washing, 'tis *Opus Charitatis*, he loves them as Brethren. But,

Secondly, Conceive them as they are *afflicti*, as Christians in misery and affliction, whipt and imprisoned; and then 'tis *Actus Misericordiæ*, an action of mercy. Before we considered them as members of Christ, and so he loved them; now behold them as the afflicted Members of Christ, and so now he pities them. Observe,

The naturallest motion of an heart converted is to commiserate the poor Saints of God, and to shew mercy towards them. In this Gabeler's Conversion, it was not only love and goodness, that God shewed to him; but mercy and pity: his wounds were now healed, his soul now washed, fed, and refreshed, and therefore naturally expresses all pity and compassion. The works of mercy are the most kindly returns of mercy received. *Ὁ ἔλεος τοῦ ἑλεος*, saith *St. Basil*; Mercy naturally breeds and provokes mercy. Wert thou furnished with all other Graces, yet thou fallest short, if thou wantest this one. *As ye abound in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, so abound in this grace*, saith *Paul*, perswading the *Corinthians* to Alms and Mercy.

These

These fruits of Piety and relief to the poor Saints, Christ,

I. Most strictly exacts.

II. Most graciously accepts.

III. Most bountifully rewards.

I. He strictly exacts them. The main tryal and enquiry at that great day shall be for these deeds of Mercy. *Te did not feed me, ye did not visit me, ye did not cloath me.* They are not charged with injustice, but for want of Mercy. Οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὀφειλῇ ἐργασάμενοι, ἀλλ' ὁ ἀκαίριος κατὰ κρίνεται, faith St. Basil; not for oppressing, but for not relieving, they are judged and condemned. And *Non quia casti, aut iusti, sed quia misericordes,* faith Chrysostome; 'tis the vertue of Pity, that's mainly required. This also,

II. He most graciously accepts. Any kindness to any of our children, we take it thankfully; but if any of them be weak, sick, or diseased, and thou tenderest or cherishest that child, we take that more kindly. *We have great joy in thy love, because the bowels of the Saints are refreshed by thee,* Philem 7. There are some certain stately good deeds, that it may be you fancy and forecast to your selves, some *Ab-salom's* Pillar; and ye know we are out-braved with erections of Abbies, and enriching of Shrines. See you not these sumptuous buildings? *Tertullian's* answer must be our Apology, and your direction, *Plus nostra misericordia insumit vicatim, quam vestra religio templatim.* We rather relieve the living Temples of God's Saints, than erect their Shrines. This, we are sure, Christ will lovingly accept. He accounts it, as if it were done to himself. Christ openly professes it, *Te have fed me.* We are ashamed to acknowledge, This man relieved me, and cloathed me: Christ will acknowledg it before Men and Angels. How welcome shall that man be to heaven, that hath fed Christ in a poor Christian? If a King should say, This man relieved me, and fed me, how would the Courtiers entertain and respect him? When Christ shall own thee for his Benefactour, how will the Angels receive and welcome thee?

It was an encouragement to *Abraham* to harbour strangers, faith St. Chrysostome, because sometimes, at unawares, he received Angels: As a Fisherman more willingly casts in his Net for Fish, because sometimes he draws up Gold or Diamonds. Thou hast a stronger encouragement to relieve poor Saints; he that receives them, receives Christ. *Qui fratrem non respicis, Christum considera; qui servum non cogitas, Dominum cogita,* faith St. Cyprian. Be willing to shew mercy, if not to a Christian, yet to Christ himself; despise not the poverty and meanness of them, nay, the rather embrace them. Christ assures thee thou shalt entertain him *in pusillo*, rather than *in magno*; *Quantò minor frater, qui admittitur; tantò major Christus, qui per eum advenit.* The meaner the Christian is, the more fully comes Christ to thee.

Thou sayest, thou wouldest relieve St. Paul, entertain *Elias*, if they would come to thee. *Quid quæris Eliam?* Receive a poor Saint, the Lord of *Elias* himself shall come to thee. What glory will this be to you rich men, to sit like *Abraham* in Paradise, not with poor *Lazarus*, but with Christ in your bosome? Πῶς ἔδει σε χάρις ἔχει. &c. faith Basil: What thanks shouldest thou give him, that will thus honour thee, to become himself the Beggar, and make thee the Benefactour? He can otherwise provide for his poor members. He can feed them himself. *The Beasts on the Mountains are all his*, but he loves thy company, bids himself home to thee.

Why did he send *Elias* to a poor Widow to nourish him? faith *Augustine*. He could have fed him by a Raven, by an Angel. True, faith he, *Sed Viduæ fecit, non Eliæ*, it was for her good, not for his own; and *non ut pasceretur, sed ut pasceret*, faith *Chrysostom*; to feed her, indeed, rather than to be fed of her; and to give her opportunity for the deeds of mercy. And then, as he graciously accepts, so above all other works,

III. He doth abundantly reward these deeds of mercy. *Quantiscunque sumptibus constat, lucrum est pietatis nomine sumptum facere,* faith *Tertullian*: 'Tis great gain, to be at cost in these works of Piety. And τὸ δῶρον, 'tis τὸ δάεισμα faith Basil. Liberality to the poor Saints, 'tis not liberality, but usury to God, and that of the highest increase. *Fœneraris hominibus, centesimum reddent; fœnerare pauperibus, centuplum recipies.* This Usury to God, gains an hundred-fold; *num centesimum, ab homine, major an centuplum à Deo?* Wilt thou not put out thy money for the greatest profit? How should this provoke your pity and compassion to the poor

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distressed Members of Christ? Especially, how should thy bowels yearn to see, not some few members afflicted, but the main Body of the Church to welter in blood? Canst thou not give thy money to relieve it, when wilt thou be willing to spend thy blood to defend it? If thou wilt not wash these wounds of the Saints, how wilt thou endure them in thine own body? If thou hast not the pity of the Gao-ler, when wilt thou have the patience of Paul? At least, if thou canst not relieve them, yet mourn for them; if thou canst not deliver them out of Prison, yet visit them in it. *If when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it*; much more when the body it self suffers, shall there any one member not condole with it? The Churches abroad, what storms of persecutions have fallen upon them, and still rest upon them? *The rod of the wicked abides upon the lot of the righteous*, shall not we mourn for them? or are we not members, because by distance of place we be divided from them? 'Tis true what Basil saith, and it suits with us, Ὁ Κύριος πᾶς μὲν ἡσους ἃ ἡπίετο διὰ θαλάσσης διέσσει, τὸς δὲ ἡνσιώτας τοῖς ἡπειρώταις διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνέδου. "Our Islands are divided from others by the Sea; but we Islanders are united with others by the bond of Charity. And Charity, when it meets with misery, is not only charity, but pity and mercy, relieving, comforting, at least condoling the miseries of our Brethren. Oh! mercy and compassion to the afflicted Saints, 'tis a powerful evidence, that we our selves have received mercy. That's a second consideration of them, as they are *afflicti*, so 'tis *opus misericordiæ*.

Thirdly, Conceive them as they are *Injuriâ affecti*, as men that were wronged and oppressed by him; and so 'tis *opus satisfactionis*, an act of satisfaction. He had tormented them before, heaped wrongs, and indignities, and vexations upon them; No doubt, with sorrow of heart, he confesses his injury, and studies and endeavours all possible satisfaction. Observe,

The truth of Conversion, as it shews it self in all duties of love and commiseration; so to those we have injured, it will express it self in a due satisfaction. The Schoolmen and Casuists are strict and express in the enforcement of this. All damages to soul, body, goods, or good Name, the remission of these faults always implies the desire and endeavour of a just restitution. Satisfaction for sin, as it is properly sinful, and tendered to God, and to purchase pardon, is impious and blasphemous. Thus to right thy Brother, were to wrong thy Saviour. But as it is offensive to man, *aut ratione damni, aut injuriæ*, either as damage or injury, done to him, and not to redeem, but to break off thy sin (and *that's the full virtue of restitution, saith Valentia*;) or, if you will further, though not to purchase, or to procure pardon, and so to submit himself to the mercy of God, as a capable subject; conceive this affection within the compass of these limitations, and no question, to satisfy thy Brother, whom thou hast formerly wronged, is a necessary fruit of true Conversion. Without this, saith St. Augustine, *Medicina pœnitentiæ non prodest*, all acts of Repentance prove ineffectual. Nay, *Non agitur pœnitentia, sed fingitur*, 'tis no true Repentance, but a meer counterfeit.

Zacheus his fact, 'tis memorable and exemplary. He thinks it not sufficient to give over his oppressions, and defraud no more; nor contents himself with bounty to the poor, to the half of his substance: but confesses his oppression, and vows a just and plentiful restitution. Oh! he that will give his own, will restore anothers; he that is merciful, cannot chuse but be just. See how gladly and freely he binds himself to it, no man accused him; he doth not like a Thief, that being pursued, lets fall his booty, because it hinders his escaping; or, as Birds of prey, that are fain to let their prey fall again, when it troubles their flight; but readily and cheerfully he confesses and restores.

And yet what's the usual conversion of an oppressing Usurer? If he call in his mony, and give over his exactions, *Salvation is presently come to his house*, he is instantly become a Son of Abraham. What is this but *latronis beneficium*, the amends that Thieves make thee, to rob thee no more? Nay, the satisfaction of Devils, that would seem to relieve those whom they cease to molest. To such Devils St. Basil compares them, ὥστε οἱ τὰς ἐπιταγὰς ποιῶντες δαίμονες, that after some certain periods of the Moon forsake their Lunatics, and so seem to refresh them:

"As

"As if it were sufficient, saith *Gregory*, not to run into farther arrearages, without ever crossing, or satisfying the books for thy former debts: Or, as *Chrysostom* conceits it, When thou hast stabb'd a man, and given him his death-wound, it were amends enough not to stab him again; but to pull out thy weapon, without ever applying any plaister to cure him.

At most, if they part with any thing, they turn it into the title of Alms, and Deeds of Charity, which God requires as a fruit of Repentance upon strict necessity. Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance, saith our Saviour; *non dignos innocentia*, saith *Gregory*; the fruits of after-innocency are not sufficient, no further to wrong them; nor *dignos misericordia*, not only the fruits of mercy, and free liberality; but *dignos paenitentia*, not in a glorious magnificent manner of free-gift and bounty; but restore and bring back again, like an humble penitent, if thou mean to satisfy. Thou meanest to bequeath it in pious usus. Why? God abhors the sacrifices of rapin and oppression. In that Case he bids thee not to leave thine offering at the Altar, and agree with thy Brother; but take back thine offering from his Altar, and restore it to thy brother. Such Sacrifices as these find less acceptance than *Cain's* oblation; it was rejected of God, saith the Father, *non quod alienum, sed quod minus praeceptum*; it was his own, but not the best and choicest, and therefore God refused it. *Οὐ λησὴν ἢ ἀρπαγὰν κοινῶν ὁ Κύριος*, saith the Father; God will have no intercourse, He will not become a receiver to Thieves and Robbers. Shall the High-Priests sling back the price of blood from their Churches treasury? and darest thou dedicate thine *Acheldema*, thy purchases of blood, to the use of his Saints, or honour of his Sanctuary? The offerings that God accepts, must be without the least relish of leaven; that sours, and embitters, and makes all thy service loathsome and unflavoury. Now, "the gain of oppression, saith *Chrysostome*, 'tis like leaven, that infects and taints all thy possessions, though lawfully gotten. *Universas facultates tuas fermentabit*. A little of this makes God abhor thy whole oblation. Purge it out by a just restitution, that so thou mayest express this character of Conversion, that the Gaoler practises. He wronged them before, he labours to satisfy; as they are *Injuria affecti*, 'tis *opus satisfactionis*.

Fourthly, Conceive them as they are *Ministri*, as the Ministers and means of his calling; and so 'tis *Opus gratitudinis*, a testimony of thankfulness. These are the servants of the most high God; these have brought the glad tidings of Grace and Salvation; not only their feet, but their wounds, and stripes, and sores are beautiful; he thankfully embraces, refreshes, and comforts them. And then, I beseech you, give way to this Observation:

That the truth of Conversion will manifest it self in all fruits of thankfulness to the Ministers of salvation. See now this Gaoler draws out the Apostles, as *Ebed-Melech* did *Jeremy*, from the depth of the Dungeon; makes his Prison, like *Obadia's* Cave, to nourish these Prophets; becomes a *Lot*, and an *Abraham*, to entertain these Angels and messengers of heaven.

Oh! art thou a new Convert? I question not thy bounty, much less thy just and lawful dealing with thy lawful Minister; with the *Shunamite*, thou wilt study and contrive all possible expressions of thy love and gratitude. See *Lydia* here, how she enforces the Apostles to accept of her Charity. The *Macedonians* beseech *St. Paul* with much entreaty to admit their bounty. The *Galatians* can pull out their eyes to gratify the Apostle. *Philemon* owes no less than himself; what he is, and what he hath, is not too dear for *Paul*.

The Primitive Christians, how did their poverty, in this kind, abound to their rich liberality? Whole states and inheritances were cheerfully offered for a supply of the Apostles, and the Churches necessities, and that with much humility and reverence; they presented it at the feet of the Apostles: A strange kind of tending a voluntary benevolence. Oh! saith *David*, *I will not serve my God with that which cost me nothing*. He judged it an indignity to the service of God, not to be at some cost and charges for the publick worship. *St. Paul*, that could easily dispense with his personal provision, yet how strictly exacts he a necessary maintenance for the Churches Ministry? *1 Cor. ix.* he grounds it upon a fourfold Law.

I. The

Serm. I.

I. The Law of Nature teaches it, *Who plants a Vine-yard, and eats not the fruit of it? Who feeds a Flock, and eats not of the milk of it?*

II. The Law of Nations requires it, *Who goes a warfare at his own charges?*

III. The Law of *Moses* commanded it, *Thou shalt not muzzle the Ox that treadeth out the Corn.*

And, upon all these,

IV. The Evangelical Law, that necessarily infers it, *Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. He hath ordained it, and they should live of it.* They are binding words, and imply necessity: And yet how many conceit it as a Popish kind of *res consilii*, in a voluntary benevolence; which the Lord requires *sub necessitate præcepti*, upon necessary obedience?

The sowing of spiritual things deserves at your hands the reaping of carnal; and we may exact it, though not *ut pretium rei*, yet as *præmium personæ*; and *non ut donum, sed ut fructum*, saith St. Paul, we require not gifts, but rejoyce to see the fruits of our labours. It comforted Paul to see the flourishing of the *Philippians* love, though he could have wanted it. *Joses*, that gave so liberally to the Apostles, *Acts* iv. 36. was surnamed by them *Barnabas*, a Son of consolation.

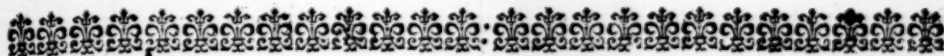
'Tis a sign they have received small store of seed, that are thus dead and barren in return of fruit. 'Tis a plain argument of a base esteem of God, of Grace, of the Kingdom of Heaven, that a Servant or Factor should have twenty times the allowance of the Agent of your souls.

That Strumpet of *Rome*, what cost doth her Lovers bestow upon her? How have those Caterpillars consumed the fat of those Lands, where they have been cherished? How many great Estates hath that Idol devoured? And is it not a shame, that their *Dagon* should be enriched, and our Ark impoverished? Nay, let me tell you, those Popish *Philistines* returned back our Ark of God not altogether empty. It had gifts and golden Emerods; but our men of *Bethshemesb*, though they receive it gladly, yet in the taking it down, they shuffled out those Emerods, and purged us clean of those superstitious endowments. But superstitious they were, and abolished they are; only Tythes, I suppose, have an higher Tenure, more Moral and Divine. Are you exact in these without fraud or sacrilege? Do you let your houses for so much rent? Methinks it sounds like St. Peter's Question, *Tell me, Sold you your Land for so much money?* I wonder *Sapphira* could not order it otherwise, and tell St. Peter, that indeed a reservation there was of an after-payment in another nature; but the price they bargained for, was just so much. No question, had it been no tie to the Spirit of God, she had escaped that fearful judgment.

At least, if hardness of heart will not yield to this, yet that, which all men conclude of, a certain, a sufficient, nay, an honourable allowance, must be made to your Ministers. What a shame is it for you, that the Guides of your souls should be distracted into anxious sollicitude for their own bodies? *Lapides Sanctuarii, in capite omnium platearum*. What pity is it to see the stones of the Sanctuary lie scattered in the street. "That is, saith *Gregory*, to have the Ministers of the Church scattered and dispersed into Secular necessities? Oh! these Fowls of the Heaven should be provided for, without their sowing and reaping. These Lillies of Paradise should not toil nor labour, and yet grow and flourish. As *Augustine*, alluding to God's Curse upon *Cain* for killing his Brother, *Let the earth be barren unto thee, when thou tillest it; Quid congruentius*, saith he, *quam ut illum, cujus scelere frater occisus est, in terra laborantem sterilitas sequeretur, illis, quorum munere fratres salvantur, de castino minimè cogitantibus, fructuosa terra serviret?* *Cain* that killed his Brother, even when he labours, is cursed with barrenness. Ministers that save their Brethren, even though they labour not, must be rewarded with fruitfulness. It was small credit for the *Ephesians*, to have S. Paul protest, *that his own hands had supplied his Necessities*. And is it not the indelible stain of many Patrons and Parishes, that their poor Ministers should be driven into Secular employments, and forced to hold some Trade in *Commendam* with their spiritual Functions? They have *Prophecied in their streets*, and there may live too; they can scarce add, *Thou hast eat and drunk in our presence, and been comforted by us.*

But better things are known of you, ye worthy Citizens; your Charity is gone abroad, your Piety hath testimony from the Church of God. Only take heed, that you marr not your gift in the manner of giving; that ye turn not your Tithes and necessary Duties into the opinion of free-will-offerings. Would you your selves take it well, that your Debtour, when he pays your own, should boast himself for your free Benefactor? And is it equal, that, that the with-holding of which the Spirit of God doth expressly call *Robbery*, the payment of it should be no Duty, but only an act of meer liberality.

Suppose the manner were left at large by the Law of God, as we are often answered; yet questionless, those generalities of sufficiency, and certainty, and bounty, being limited to this rate by the interposition of lawful Authority, puts a bond of Conscience upon you, and absolute necessity. *These things ought you to do*, saith Christ to the Jews, and they did accordingly. Are you worse than Jews? or your Pastours viler than Scribes and Pharisees? What ever others do, yet you that have felt the saving power of this blessed Ordinance, you that have been watered with those showers of Grace, you cannot be barren or unfruitful, you will chearfully express the truth of your conversion by all possible thankfulness, to the means of your salvation. That's a fourth Consideration, as they are Ministers, so 'tis *Opus gratitudinis*.

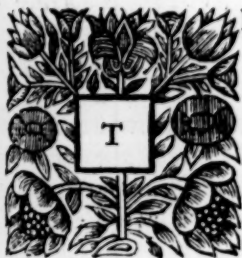


A

S E R M O N

On PROV. XX. 9.

Who can say, I have made mine heart clean, I am pure from my sin?



He trial, and examination of our hearts and ways, to see in what state and condition our souls are, in reference to God, what progress we have made in that great work of Mortification; the enquiry into this, is a Duty, though hard and difficult; yet exceeding useful and beneficial to us. The Scripture often calls upon us to make this enquiry. *Commune with your own hearts*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. iv. 4. Examine your selves, prove your selves*, saith St. Paul, *2 Cor. xiii. 5. Let us search, and try our ways*, saith the Prophet *Jeremy, Lament. iii. 40.* And accordingly the Saints and Servants of God have set themselves to this holy practice. *I have considered my ways*, saith *David, Psal. cxix. 59. I commune with mine own heart, and my Spirit makes diligent search*, *Psal. lxxvii. 6.* And 'tis worth the enquiry what return and account the Saints have made upon this search and scrutiny, what verdict and sentence they have passed upon themselves. And *Solomon* gives it up here, both for himself, and all other men. And 'tis a sad, and sorrowful account; 'tis like the cry of the Leper, *Levit. xiii. 45. I am unclean, I am unclean.* 'Tis the confession of the *Publican, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.* 'Tis *Job's* lamentation, *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* Briefly, here is the account, that, upon an impartial search, the Spirit of a Christian must give up for it self; and that is a sad discovery of much sin and corruption.

The holiest man living, if he look strictly into his Conscience, shall find many stains and blemishes in his soul, many defilements of sin, many imperfections of Grace, many failings and slips in his best performances, which will draw from him this mournful Exclamation, *Who can say, I have made mine heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*

The

Serm. I. The Text then, 'tis a serious conviction of our sinful condition; it assures us of the imperfection of our Mortification; it tells us there is not any, the most regenerate man, that is fully freed from the contagion and pollution of sin. We may say of this portion of Scripture, what S. Paul saith of the Scripture, in general, Gal. iii. 22. *this Scripture concludes all under sin; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19.

For the better understanding of this Truth, we will take the words into a two-fold consideration.

First, We will consider the matter proposed, and that will shew us the Nature of the Duty of Mortification.

Secondly, We will consider the Manner of propounding of it; 'tis by way of Question, and Interrogation; *Who can say?* And that shews us the difficulty of the Duty of Mortification, how hardly it is performed.

First, The Duty; and then,

Secondly, The Difficulty.

First, Let us consider the Duty to be done, that's *the cleansing of our hearts, to be pure from sin*. 'Tis a good description of that great and necessary work of Mortification. And in it we may take notice of three things:

First, Here is the Act it self to be performed; that's called here *mundatio*, a making clean, or cleansing.

Secondly, Here is the Object or Matter that must be wrought upon, and cleansed, *the heart*.

Thirdly, Here is the Measure and degree of it, at which we must aim, that's expressed in the last clause of the Text, *I am pure from my sin*.

First, The first thing considerable is the Action it self, *I have cleansed*; and it affords us a threefold Meditation.

I. The first is from the Nature of the Action, 'tis called a *cleansing*, or *making clean*.

II. A second is from the Property of the Agent, that's *I*.

III. The third is from the Circumstance of the Time, in the performance of it, *I have cleansed*.

I. For the Nature of the Action, 'tis called a *cleansing*. 'Tis a word implying some change and alteration, that is to be made in us. The Text doth not say, *I am clean*, but *I have cleansed*. *I am cleansed*, that betokens a state, and fixed condition; but *I have cleansed*, that implies a change and alteration. 'Tis one thing to *be pure*, another thing to *be purged*. A thing may be originally, and constantly pure, and so continue, it was never otherwise; but that which is purged, was formerly impure, some dross was mixed with it, 'twas tainted with pollution. St. John points out that difference, 1 John iii. 3. *He that hath this hope in him, purgeth himself, as God is pure*. God he is pure, the Saints are purged and purified. God is originally, and unchangeably pure, but the Saints are not so; they are purged, and altered, and changed, and so brought to purity.

It shews us two things:

1. The Nature of sin, 'tis a matter of uncleanness.

2. The Nature of Grace, it hath the virtue of cleansing us.

1. Consider here the Nature of Sin; it brings upon our souls a spiritual uncleanness. 'Tis the usual expression, by which the Scripture sets out the evil of sin, 'tis called an *uncleanness*, Rom. vi. 10. *You have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, to commit iniquity*. Again, the Scripture calls it a *defilement*, Tit. i. 15. *The mind and conscience of unbelievers are defiled*. 'Tis called a *pollution*, Ezek. xvi. 6. *I saw thee polluted in thine own blood*. 2 Pet. ii. 20. there sins are called, *The pollutions of the world*. 'Tis called a *filthiness*, Psal. xiv. 3. *They are altogether become filthy*. 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit*.

To make us conceive this uncleanness of sin, the Scripture sets it out by many Similitudes:

(1.) The uncleanness of Sin, is represented by those many legal uncleannesses, which are specified, and forbidden in Moses his Law. All those Typical pollutions served

served to this purpose, to shadow out the spiritual defilements, which Sin brings upon us. *Serm. 1.*

(2.) Again, the uncleanness of Sin, 'tis represented to us by the uncleanest Beasts; as the Dog, the Swine, the Serpent: all these are made Emblems and Representations of Sin. *De grege facta est egregia creatura*, saith St. Bernard. Man, the choicest of all the creatures, by Sin becomes like the unclean Beasts.

(3.) 'Tis represented to us by the uncleanest diseases; the Botches and Sores of Egypt, the loathsomeness of Leprosie; those filthy and abhorred diseases, that the Scriptures mention, all of them serve to make us conceive the pollutions of Sin.

It should fasten our most serious thoughts upon this Consideration, that Sin brings upon us a great uncleanness; it will afford these three useful and pious Meditations.

1. Is Sin an uncleanness? Uncleanness is a debasing quality, it vilifies whatsoever it cleaves unto. Unclean things are vile things. Purity carries with it an excellency; every thing, the more pure it is, the more precious it is. The purest Gold is the richest; the more dross is in it, the more vile and base it is. *Impuritas est ex mixtura vilioris*, Scalig. Mingle with any thing that which is baser, and ye make it viler. *Sordescit aliquid, cum inferiori miscetur natura; etiam de puro Argento sordidatur Aurum, si miscatur*, Aug. 'Tis so with Sin, it debases that soul that commits it, and makes it vile.

What Jacob said to his Son Reuben, may be truly said to every Sinner, *Thou wert the excellency of dignity, but now thou hast defiled thy self, thy excellency is gone, thou art become vile and contemptible*. Man was in honour, but by sinning, he is become as the beasts that perish, Psal. xlix. 12. 'Tis piety and goodness, that raiseth the price and worth of any man. The Righteous, saith Solomon, is more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. xii. 26. But Sin debases him, and makes him worthless. Hence it is, that Sins are called by the Apostle, *Passions of Ignominy, dishonourable lusts*. 'Tis the main brand of reproach that is laid upon Satan, he is called an *unclean Spirit*; not so much a rebellious, or malicious, or impious (though he be all these) but this is his name of Infamy, that the Scripture sets upon him, *He is an unclean Spirit*.

2. Is Sin an uncleanness? Uncleanness, 'tis a loathsome quality. Filthiness stirs up abomination, and a loathing in us. Other considerations of sin stir up other affections. The disobedience of sin breeds anger: the Enmity of sin begets hatred of God: the Mischief of sin begets revenge; but the Impurity of sin, the uncleanness of it, that begets abomination.

This pollution of sin makes the soul of a Sinner look loathsome in the eyes of God, Job xv. 16. *How abominable and filthy is man, which drinks iniquity as water? A wicked man is loathsome*, saith Solomon, Prov. xiii. 5. And God threatneth his People, if they sin against him, *Levit. xxvi. 30. My Soul shall abhor you*. And the Prophet Zachary expresses a mutual antipathy 'twixt God and a Sinner, Chap. xi. 8. *My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me*. Solomon passes this doom upon a wicked man, *The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*. 'Tis a full expression; it implies not a dislike only, or some distaste, or offence; but it imports a deep detestation, an utter abhorring: the heart rises, the blood boils at that which it loaths and abominates.

3. Is Sin an Uncleanness? Uncleanness is a thing odious in it self, and for it self, though there be no other consequences, that do attend it. If it be unclean, it is odious, though it be not pernicious. Filthiness is in it self the matter of detestation. Loathsome diseases are more odious to us, than painful diseases, tho' they be more dangerous. Who had not rather be tormented with the stone, than be defiled with Leprosie? Such a disease is sin. Were there no other malignant, or mischievous attendants upon it, did it not provokes God's anger, incense vengeance, lay us open here to misery, sink us into Hell, plunge us into perdition; were these stings taken out of it, yet who would put such an unclean and filthy Serpent into his bosom? Here is enough to set us off from any wicked way, that it defiles and pollutes us, that it makes us loathsome to God, and his Angels; and we shall one day loath our selves for it, Ezek. xx. 24. *Ye shall remember your ways, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath your selves in your own sight*. Thus Job abhors himself. Thus David cries out of his sins: *My Wounds stink, and are corrupt*, Psal. xxxviii. 5. Nay, *Ipsae vulnerum cicatrices fetent*; Nazianz.

Serm. I. A Penitent sinner loaths the very scars of his sins, after they are healed.

It should make us to look upon Sin in these true appearances of it; esteem it according to the odious aggravations that God hath put upon it. And that would beget in us *sanctum fastidium*, an holy loathing of it. We have gentle constructions, more plausible and moderate names, more seemly colours, which we put upon it, and that makes it go down so easily with us. 'Tis a good Rule of *Parisenfis*, *Sancti cogitant turpia, at magis abominantur*. A good Christian will consider Sin in the most loathsome Notions of sin, so to beget in himself an abomination of it.

That's the first thing considerable; the Nature of Sin, 'tis an Uncleaness.

2. This action of cleansing, it shews us *naturam gratiae*, the sovereign virtue of Grace and Repentance; 'tis of a purging virtue, it hath a power of cleansing us from the pollutions of Sin. All those purifications, and ceremonial cleansings in the Law of Moses, were so many Types, and Representations of it. 'Tis compared,

(1.) To clean Water, which washes away filth, and bodily pollution, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness*. And what he means by that, he tells you, *Verse, 27. I will put my Spirit within you*. Those streams of living Water, they shall wash away all our defilements. This God promises to his Church, *Zech. xiii. 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness*. So *Isaiab* calls the people to repentance under this Similitude, *Isai. i. 16. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before me*.

(2.) This work of Grace is compared to a Wind. So it came upon the Apostles, And Christ compares the Spirit of Regeneration to the blowing of the wind, *John iii. 8*. And the Wind hath a power of cleansing, *Job xxxvii. 12. The wind passeth, and cleanseth*. *Jermy* tells of a Wind, to fan, and to cleanse. Such are the breathings of the Holy Spirit.

(3.) 'Tis compared to a Fire, and that's of a purifying nature; that eats out, and consumes all dross, and corruption. And such is the Grace of Christ: *He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire, Mat. iii. 11. Isaiab* puts both Water, and Fire together, to express the efficacy of the grace of God, *He shall wash away the filth of Zion, and purge it with the spirit of burning, Isai. iv. 4*. The Prophet *Malachi* tells us, Christ's Spirit shall be like a Refiners fire, and like Fullers sope, or the Herb *Borith*, that's effectual for cleansing.

This grace of Christ is able to fetch out the greatest stains, and pollutions of sin. *David's* sin of Adultery and Murder, brought upon his soul a foul Uncleaness; yet he hopes that Grace was able to cleanse him; *Wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow, Psal. li. 7*. The sins of *Jerusalem* were of a foul pollution, Oppression, and Blood-shed, heinous pollutions; yet what saith the Prophet? *Wash you, make you clean; though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool*. So the *Corinthians* sins were heinous pollutions, *1 Cor. vi. 9. Extortioners, Drunkards, Adulterers, Sodomites; but ye are washed*, saith St. Paul, *but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*.

That's the second thing, the virtue and efficacy of grace; 'tis able to cleanse us. We have done with the Action. Come we,

II. To the Agent, *I have cleansed*. It may seem somewhat strange, that the Text here makes us Agents in this great work. The Scripture else-where seems to deny the ability of it to any man. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one*, saith *Job xiv. 4. Can the Black-moor change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*, *Jer. xiii. 23*. What said the King of *Israel*? *Am I a God, to cleanse a man from his Leprosy*? We must know the Scripture speaks of a double cleansing:

1. Sin is cleansed in our Justification, when 'tis pardoned and forgiven us. This cleansing belongs only to God; 'tis he alone that can thus cleanse us, 'tis he alone can blot out our iniquities, pardon our offences. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgressions of his people? Micah vii. 18*. The *Pharisees* were in the right in this point, when they said, *Who can forgive sins, but God only?*

Indeed there are some dispositions, and gracious preparations required on our part, as Sorrow and Humiliation; and some conditions, as Faith, and seeking unto Christ; but the very act of Forgiveness, 'tis only God's. But,

2. Sin hath another cleansing, and that's by mortification, and regeneration, and conversion,

conversion. The progress of these acts God works in us, and by us; His Spirit enables us to carry forward this work, which he graciously begins, and to cleanse our selves. He gives us the first stock of grace, and enables us to improve it. As a Surgeon first dresses a wound, and gives the wounded man salve to dress it himself. To this the Scripture exhorts us; *Wash you, make you clean*, Isai. i. 16. *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be clean*, Jer. iv. 14. *Let us cleanse our selves from all defilements of flesh and spirit*, 2 Cor. viii. 1. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purifie your hearts, ye double minded*, Jam. iv. 8. This work, as 'tis principally God's, so 'tis ours also under God, and in the strength of his grace we may, and must perform it. 'Twas Naaman's errour, he would be cleansed from his Leprosie, and sit still, *Elisha* must do all; no, what saith the Prophet? *Go unto Jordan, wash thy self seven times in it, and thou shalt be clean*. Up, and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee.

Serm. I.

And then,
III. There is a third thing considerable, that's the circumstance of Time, *I have cleansed*. The Negative part belongs to the Question; but here I look upon it as a work of continuance. No question, the Saints have entred upon this work; but yet 'tis not so finished, but still they must go on in this work of cleansing. Mortification, 'tis not *in instanti*, a work soon and easily dispatcht, and rid out of hand; but of long continuance: it requires progress and perseverance. The wound of Sin may be given in an instant; but the cure of sin is a matter of more length of time. Poyson may suddenly be taken down; but 'tis not expelled and wrought out again, but by tract of time. 'Tis a sign they never truly begun it, that do say or think, they have already finish'd it. Sin never dies suddenly, though we may do so. The death of sin, 'tis a lingring death. *Sentiant se mori*, was the Emperour's speech. A Christian must feel the growth and progress of Mortification. 'Tis well if we can say of this work of Mortification, as Christ said of his work of Redemption, when we are a dying, *Consummatum est*; 'Tis now at last finish'd: till then we cannot. A good Christian dies daily to sin; but the last gasp of sin is with the last breath of life. 'Tis final grace that finishes this work.

We have done with the action of Mortification: Come we now,

Secondly, To the Object, or Matter, that's Our Heart; *I have cleansed mine heart*. Indeed this work of cleansing must be entire, and universal; it must be as large as the whole man. *Flesh and Spirit*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *The whole Spirit, and soul, and body*, 1 Thess. v. 23. *Hands and heart*, James iv. 8. *Feet, and hands, and head*, as Peter speaks. The Plaster must be as broad as the Sore. Sin is an over-spreading contagion; there is no found part in us, *we must mortifie all our members, that are upon the earth; the whole body of sin must be abolished*, Rom. vi. 6.

But yet this cleansing is, in a special manner, appropriated to the heart. Why so? I. Cor. 'tis *conceptaculum peccati*; the Heart is the fountain and original, from whence all other uncleannesses do stream and flow. *From the heart*, saith Christ, *come murders, adulteries, all these sins defile a man*, Mat. xv. 18. This made Solomon call for our greatest care over our heart: *Keep thine heart with all diligence, from thence come the issues of life*; I, and of Death too. Life is in the outward man, like light in the air; but 'tis in the heart, like light in the Sun. From thence flows the source of all uncleannesses. As Moses put his hand into his bosom, and it came out Leprous; so our outward man draws all its pollution from the heart within. An evil heart makes an adulterous eye, a deceitful tongue, a violent hand; all outward sins are the off-spring of the heart.

II. Cor. 'tis *receptaculum peccati*; the heart is the lurking, and starting-hole, to which sin betakes it self. Outward restraint may hinder the actual commission of sin; but yet our corruptions will recoil to our hearts. *His Heart gathers iniquity to it self*, Psal. xli. 6. as a corrupt putrified part will gather corruption to it self; there is the sink, and sediment of all corruptions. As in Winter we see the Trees seem to be dead; not a leaf left on the boughs or branches; but then the sap runs to the root, that keeps life in it. A man may be free from outward enormities, and yet his heart be guilty of inward pollutions. Thus Job reproves his accusers, *Tou shall say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me*? This makes the work of Mortification so hard and difficult; because 'tis so hard to work upon the heart.

Serm. I. As we know, 'tis an easier matter to heal an outward wound, than to stanch an inward bleeding, or to cure an Ulcer in our inward parts. *Cor primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*; as in nature, so in sin.

III. *Cor*, 'tis *sustentaculum peccati*, the heart is the proper seat, and residence of sin; there is a full sufficiency in the heart to commit any sin; there is the Adultery of the heart in lust, the Murder of the heart in hatred, the Theft of the heart in Covetousness. Outward awe may deter us from these bodily commissions, and yet our hearts may be guilty of these very sins. *In ipsa intus voluntate peccat, qui non voluntate, sed timore non peccat*; saith *Augustine*. *Fecit, quia voluit*. He sins, that would sin, though he doth not act it. Remove Objects, break off Instruments, avoid occasions, yet our heart can conceive, and act sin in it self. *Voluntas ipsa sibi imputatur, nec excusari potest per illam perficiendi infelicitatem, operata quod suum fuerat*; *Tertullian*. The heart is a sinner, though the outward man concur not.

There remains one Particular more; and that is,

Thirdly, The measure and degree of Mortification; *I am pure from my sin*. This is the high aim that a Christian must set to himself, to press forward to perfection. *Purgatio*, 'tis *motus ad puritatem*; Purging is never sufficiently done, till it attain to pureness. What one can do, we shall hear hereafter; but this is that which we must desire to do, not only to break the strength of Sin, that it do not overmaster us; but to fetch out the very life of Sin, that it may not molest us: not only subdue the *Canaanite*, but destroy him; not only lop off the boughs of Sin, but pluck up the roots of Sin: *non ut nē regnet tantum, sed ut nē sit*: not only that it bears no sway with us, but that it have no place in us. This is the aim and measure of a Christian. *Mensura hominis*, 'tis *mensura Angeli*, we should aim at Angelical perfection, to do God's will in earth, as 'tis done in Heaven. Our Primitive purity, that we had in Paradise, to recover that; our final purity, that we shall have in Heaven, to attain to that, that must be the aim and pursuit of a Christian.

And the expression of the Text, 'tis very significant: *Pure from my sin*: it lays our Sin at our own doors, and so it concerns us to rid our selves of it. Sin, 'tis my sin.

I. 'Tis my sin, *Habet originem à me*: Sin, 'tis ours, as being the issue of our nature, the Off-spring of our will. Many Disputes have been of the first cause, and original of sin, the Text tells us whence it is, to whom we must impute it, even to our selves. Neither Satans suggestions, nor any other temptation can excuse us from it. *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and is enticed*, *Jam. i. 14*. *Partus sequitur ventrem*: the Devil may be the Father, but our own hearts, that receive his temptations, are the Mother. The Mothers side is the surest, and so we must own it.

II. 'Tis my sin, and only mine. Our good works are ours: but yet God's too: nay, they are more God's works than ours; 'tis he that works all our good works in us. But as for our sins, they are only ours. We may say of them, as that devout Penitent said of his Illegitimate Child, *In eo nihil habui, præter peccatum*. The sinfulness of all our actions, 'tis only ours. If God shall say to us, *Tolle quod tuum est, & abi*; Take that which is thine own: 'twill prove only sin and impiety.

III. 'Tis my sin, even after 'tis past, and after 'tis committed; yet while the stain of it is not fetch'd out by Repentance, our Consciences must own it. Alas! we think sin vanishes with the acting; we count it but a transient thing; when 'tis past and over, we hope never to hear more of it. No, 'tis ours still, till it be pardoned and purged. *God requires that which is past*, saith *Solomon*, *Eccles. iii. 15*. *Transit actus, manet reatu*. My sin, saith *David*, is ever before me; it haunted his Conscience. Indeed when God discharges us of it, then we may say, *Peccatum non meum*, What have I to do with thee? but till then, the guilt of it will dog thee, the uncleanness of it will still cleave to thee.

IV. 'Tis my sin, that I must purge, that sin which above others I account mine, and do most delight in; that above all must be cleansed and mortified. The Pharisee boasted he was free from other mens sins; he was not like the Publican. We bless our selves, if the sins of other men break not out upon us; *I am not so*, or such a sinner; but, *Are there not sins with you, even with you also?* as the Prophet

phet speaks to the people of *Israel*: No, labour to purge, and mortifie thy proper and special Sin. Serm. I.

1. The sin of thine inbred and natural inclination. For though our Original sin disposes us to all sins: yet our personal inclinations carry us more strongly to some kind of sin.

2. My Sin, the sin of mine Age: that to which thine years and age do dispose thee; as child-hood is idle, youth wanton, old age covetous. These must be striven against.

3. My sin, the sins of my Calling and Vocation. Every Calling hath its temptations, unto which they are subject. These must be cleansed. We must be able to say with *David*, *I have kept myself from mine iniquities*, Psal. xviii. 23.

We have seen the Duty proposed, *the cleansing of our hearts from our sin*. Now follows,

Secondly, The manner of propounding of it, which is by way of Question and Interrogation, *Who can say?* and that shews the Difficulty of the Duty: and, in respect of the full perfection of it, the Impossibility. And here we have,

First, The Person questioned: *Who?*

Secondly, Then the Enquiry it self: *Who can say, I have cleansed?*

First, Here is the Person questioned: *Who?* Indeed this Question, 'tis not meant nor made for all sorts of Sinners. There are such, whose lives testify against them, such as are unquestionably notorious Sinners.

I. *Solomon* propounds not this question to the prophane man; such as sin with greediness, that make a Trade and Profession of Sin. There is no question to be made of them; *Such are judged of all, and condemned of all*: such God complains of, *Jerem. ii. 34. I have not found out thy sin by secret search, it appears openly.*

II. Nor doth he propound this question to the grossly-ignorant man; that knows not his own heart: but is utterly unacquainted with the state and condition of his soul, what it is, or what shall become of it. His soul serves him for Salt only, to keep him from putrifying. *Solomon* tells us of such as know no difference 'twixt the soul of a man, and the soul of a beast, *Eccles. iii. 19.*

III. Nor is this question intended for the negligent and careless man; that never minds the welfare of his soul, takes no heed to his ways, never communes with his own heart, nor makes enquiry into the condition of it; such as *Jeremy* speaks of, *Chap. viii. 6. that never say to themselves, What have I done?* These, and such as these, live, and lie in Sin, never have escaped the pollutions of the world in the least degree. Their condition is, questionless, miserable.

No; the question reaches to the best sort of men, those that have made a good progress in this work of cleansing, and mortification; yet which of them can say, *I am pure from my sin?*

1. *Who*, though never so innocent, and unblameable in humane conversation? Though no man can accuse them, yet God and their own Consciences may justly condemn them. There is in the holiest man that that doth defile him, some remainders of corruption still stick to him. What, saith holy *Job*, *Chap. ix. 30. If I wash my self with Snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

2. *Who*, though never so Penitent? yet who hath found, and felt, and bewailed sufficiently all his corruptions? *Though they wash themselves with Nitre, or Fuller's Sope, yet their spots and blemishes will not utterly be removed. Quis in hac vita sic mundus, ut non sit magis, magisque mundandus?* Aug. Purge out the old leaven, as ye are unleavened. A Christian is much unleavened, and yet still hath leaven to purge out, *1 Cor. v. 7.*

3. *Who*, though never so vigilant and watchful over his ways? though he keep his heart with all diligence, as *Solomon* advises him; yet some sins of surreption will steal in upon him. They, that are clean, yet had need to wash their feet, saith our Saviour; nay their hands and their hearts too; daily defilements will grow upon them.

4. *Who?* *Quis à peccato absolutus?* who, though already justified, though he hath obtained

Serm. I. obtained the pardon of his sins, and his peace, and acquittance from God, yet can say, he is fully cleansed from his pollutions, which his sins have brought upon him. Besides the guilt of sin, there is *macula peccati*, the stain that sin brings upon the soul. Though his transgression be pardoned, yet that sticks fast on; the corruption is not so soon wrought out, and compleat purity fully attained. *Numquid, quia deleta est iniquitas, finita est infirmitas?* saith *St. Augustine*: Though the iniquity of sin be pardoned, yet the infirmity of sin, that's not presently cured. *He forgives thine iniquity*, saith *David*, and *heals thy diseases*. The Sun enlightens in an instant: but it heals and warms by leisure and degrees. Pardoning mercy is of quicker dispatch than healing mercy. *David* was presently pardoned, as soon as he confessed his sin: *The Lord hath taken away thy sin*, said *Nathan*, *thou shalt not die*: but yet it cost him many prayers and tears, to be cleansed, and healed. How doth he complain of broken bones? How doth he pray, *Wash me, cleanse me, establish me with thy free spirit*? He gives not over those supplications. He was soon freed à morte peccati, from the death of sin: but not so soon à morbo peccati: long did he groan under the languishings of that sin, ere he could recover them. The man that was deadly wounded, was saved in the way from the danger of death, but yet he was left in the Inn or Lazar-house, to be cured of his wounds, *Luke x. Infunditur vinum & oleum in via; sed sanatur in stabulo*, saith *Augustine*. The Wine and Oyl of Mercy saved him from death: but yet he must continue in the Chirurgeon's hand to get health and strength.

That's the Person questioned.

Let us now consider,

Secondly, The Question it self, *Who can say, I have made mine heart clean?* And this form of Question, *Who can say?* prevents and convinces many sly evasions, and false answers that men are ready to return to this Question.

I. The Question stands thus, *Who can say?* it runs not thus, *Who doth say?* There are those, that say it, and would have others think it, that they are pure, and clean, and free from sin. *Solomon* points them out, and they are not a few; he tells us there's a whole generation of them, *Proverbs xxx. 12. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness*. And he tells us, you may know them by their looks, *O how lofty are their eyes, and their eye-lids are lifted up*, admiring themselves, despising all others. Just of the *Pharisees* disposition, *Luke xviii.* he had no sin to be pardoned, no corruption to be bewailed, no lust to be mortified, no grace to be supplied; but all his devotion is, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men, nor like as this Publican*. The Prophet *Isaiah* sets them down in their colours, *Chap. lxxv. 5.* they say to all others, *Stand by thy self, come not near me, I am holier than these*. Christ must not eat with *Publicans and Sinners*. Nay, he is no Prophet with them, if he suffer a poor sinner to touch him, *Luke vii.* And who, I pray you, is this, that finds this fault? A *Pharisee*, you may be sure. But, what was his name? He was *Simon*, a *Lepre*, for all his Holiness.

II. The Question is thus framed, *Who can say?* not thus, *Who will say, he is pure from his sin?* The Saints will not say so, saith the *Pelagian*, though they be free from sin; but out of their humility they forbear to say so; 'Tis *propter periculum inanis gloriæ* (as *Bellarmino* speaks in the like Case.) Lest they should seem to be vain-glorious, they will be content to be accounted sinners. What is this, but to complement, not to complain to God, that we are sinners? Thus, tell the *Pelagians* that Infants are sinners; no, that they deny, but yet they will allow them to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. That's but *Stylus Curia*, you may for form-sake use these words, though they be not sinners. What saith *St. Augustine* to these sleights and evasions? *Non tantum humiliter, sed & veraciter se dicunt Peccatores*; 'tis not only an humble, but a true confession, that we are all sinners. *If we say, we have no sin, there is no truth in us*, saith *St. John*. 'Tis not only want of humility, but of truth, and conscience, and sincerity, to say, We are no sinners.

3. The Question is, *Who can say?* 'tis not thus expressed, *Who dare say, he is pure from sin?* as being so assured. The *Papists* teach, no man must say so, *ob incertitudinem gratia*,

gratiæ, non ob certitudinem peccati. They tell us, the meaning of the word is, that we cannot be assured we are in the state of Grace, that our sins are pardoned, that our souls are sanctified, that our corruptions are mortified, though they be so. Hope well we may upon probable conjectures, but certain we cannot be of our spiritual condition. An Assertion so destructive to all true comfort, that *Luther* said well, *That for this opinion alone the Church of Rome was to be abhorred.* No, the Text imports not a good Christian's uncertainty of Grace: but his certainty of Sin. It bids us not doubt of our spiritual Conversion, but to be truly sensible of our sinful corruption; not to suspect *primitias gratiæ*, to call in question the first-fruits of Grace, but to acknowledge, and bewail *reliquias peccati*, the remainders of Sin.

A Christian may certainly find the work of God's Grace in himself, and take comfort in it, and yet withal may feel in himself the motions of sin, and confess, and bewail it. The soul of a Christian is like the womb of *Rebekkah*, where flesh and spirit, the Grace of Regeneration, and the dregs of Corruption, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, are striving and wrestling. *Paul* felt the Law of the Spirit, and the Law of the flesh still stirring in him. He was sure of both of them; *I know, that in my flesh dwells no good thing*: and again he saith, *We have received the Spirit of God, that we may know those things that are given us of God*, 1. Cor. ii. 12. *St. John* knew both: *If we say, we have no sin, we deceive our selves*, 1 John i. 8. there is confession of sinful corruption: and yet again he saith, *Hereby we know, we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*: there is the feeling and assurance of spiritual Regeneration. *Spiritus Sanctus non est Scepticus; nec dubia, aut opiniones in cordibus nostris scribit, sed affectiones ipsa vitâ, & omni experientiâ certiores, & firmiores.* *Luther.*

IV. The Question is, *Who can say?* It gives contradiction to *Pelagius* his Assertion, that *Any man might say so.* He confesses sometimes, that no man is free from Sin; but withal he affirms, every man may, if he will, live without Sin. Indeed, this proud Opinion of *Pelagius*, that same ἀνυπαγνοία, which he so boasts of, That man by his Free-will might abstain from all sin, 'twas the root and original of all his Heresie. But what saith *St. Augustine*? *If by Nature we may be free from Sin, then Christ died in vain.*

Saint Paul tells us of ἀδύνατον, of the impossibility of fulfilling the Law, by reason of our flesh. Not that the Law is in it self impossible, but in hoc statu, or rather casu, as by our first fall we are now weakned, so 'tis impossible. Had we continued in our integrity, the Law had been easie; but the Case is far otherwise by our sinful infirmity. We do not say, the Law is impossible, as we say 'tis impossible for a sound man to flie; but as we say 'tis impossible for a lame man to run. So that this difficulty we find, argues not the impossibility of the Duty; but the impotency of the party for the performance of it.

But yet, to mend the matter, the *Papists* tell us, that though by the strength of nature we cannot, yet by the ordinary assistance and supplies of Grace, we may avoid all sin, fulfil all righteousness, and perform the Law to the utmost. But when this Doctrine of theirs is brought to the Tryal, they are found guilty of what the next Verse condemns, *They have false Weights, and false measures to judge by.*

1. They make those no sins against the Law, which are sins, and forbidden by the Law: as idle Speeches, petty Pilferings, sudden and passionate Swearings and Blasphemies. These, they say, are no mortal sins, nor do they hinder Perfection.

2. They make those no Duties, which are Duties, but call them Counsels only, which do not oblige us: *To love our Enemies*, 'tis no Duty with them, but a Supererogation; a man, they say, is not bound to it. No; let us seriously consider what *David* saith, *Thy Law is exceeding broad.* There are two dimensions in it:

(1.) The first is the *maximum quod sic*; that is the extension and largeness of what is commanded; that's *toto corde*: we must obey with all our heart, with all our strength; that takes in all sorts of good works, and makes them necessary. And then there is,

(2.) A second dimension, that's *minimum quod non*; the strictness of every thing that is forbidden; that's *Non concupisces, Thou shalt not lust.* That forbids all evil motions,

Serm. I.

motions, and makes them mortal sins: the highest perfections are necessary Duties; the smallest infirmities are sinful transgressions. Bring thine actions to this standard and trial, and thou wilt be found *minus habens*, far short of perfection.

V. The Question is, *Who can say, I have made my heart clean?* 'Tis not said, *Who can say, I have kept my heart clean?* And so the Question reflects upon our original corruption. We brought with us unclean hearts into the world, stained and defiled with our original pollution. And 'tis that, which makes the work of Mortification so hard and difficult. We have a sink of sin inbred in us, which can hardly be cleansed; as 'tis hard drawing and drying up a Pond that's fed with a Spring. We all set out to Sea in a Leaking Vessel, that still lets in Water; we must always be Pumping. This St. Paul calls *invasor aquarum*, the sin that still besets us, and hangs fast upon us. And this makes the cure to be so tedious; as those diseases which are natural and hereditary, like the Leprosie of Gehazi's Children, they are much harder to be cured, than other casual and incident maladies; as Cloth that's died in the Wool, will hardly be changed from the first tincture. This sin makes us sinners even before we can act or commit sin. As those venomous creatures, that have poyson bred in them, are hateful in their spawn, though they have not been hurtful in any actual mischief. *Quæ crescentia sunt perniciofa, eadem sunt vitiosa nascentia*, saith the Oratour; that which is hurtful being grown, is hateful in the brood. These natural propensities to sin, which are inbred in us, they do defile and pollute us.

So then we see the strength of this Question. We may safely resolve it into a peremptory assertion, and conclude, *No man is clear, and free from sin.* A right Believer must acknowledge it, a good Christian, to his grief and sorrow, finds and feels it. It may well pass here for a Proverb, 'tis fitted for every mans Conscience, as Luther said of Proverbs, *Experientia, Proverbiorum Mater*; every mans experience will prove the truth of it.

A sad Question it is, and should be pronounced with a mournful accent; but yet, though it be a Question tending to humiliation, yet 'tis not a Question to breed despair. A good Christian, in all this perplexity, may return such answers, as may ease his Conscience.

1. No man can say, *That he is pure from his sin*, but yet this a good Christian can say, *I have obtained of God the pardon of my sin, my peace is made up in Heaven with him.* Though I am imperfectly cleansed, yet here is my comfort, I am fully pardoned. This was St. Paul's comfort, when he bemoaned himself for those infirmities, that did perplex him: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect?* 'Tis God that justifies. He doth not say, 'Tis God that sanctifies, because that work is imperfect; our Sanctification cannot bear us out against God's Justice; but here is his comfort, 'tis God that justifies, that pardons, and acquits us. *Christ came not only by water, but by blood*; though the water of Sanctification do not perfectly cleanse us, yet the blood of Redemption, that shall acquit us. 'Twas the devout Fathers joy and comfort, *Gloriabor, non quia justus sum, sed quia redemptus sum*; in this I rejoyce, not that I am innocent, but that I am redeemed, and my sins pardoned.

2. No man can say, that *He is pure from his sin*; but yet this a good Christian can say,

1. I lament, and bewail my sin, that sticks so close to me; I allow not my self the commission of any one sin, I abhor mine uncleanness in dust and ashes.

2. I strive, and endeavour, and fight against all my corruptions, I account it not a liberty, but a captivity to be subject to sin.

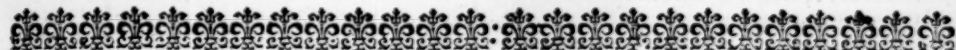
3. I have got some victory, and through the grace of Christ I have broken the strength and dominion of sin; Sin doth not rule and reign in my mortal body, I do not yield my members as weapons to Sin. If Sin be disarmed, the *Militia* is taken from him, sure then his Kingdom is broken, and in part subdued.

4. I long for that time, when Sin shall be abolish'd, *He that is dead, is freed from sin*, saith St. Paul. That makes a good Christian think of death with Comfort; then shall I be rid of all my corruptions. Final Grace purges out all sin. Sin, it leaves us as the unclean Spirit left the young man in the Gospel, it rent him, and

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ture him, and laid him for dead, and so went out of him. The Earthen Vessel must be broken in pieces, that's the cleansing of it, *Levit. vi.* Serm. I.

He that can part with that which is dear to him, and willingly embrace that which is most displeasing to him, that so he may be rid of Sin; may well comfort himself against all his corruptions. Now Life, that's the sweetest thing to man; Death the most bitter: but a good Christian will be content to part with Life, because it is the time of Sin; and to welcome Death, because that puts an end to all our Sins. If the hatred of Sin overcome in us the love of life, and horror of death, canst thou say truly, "*I will part with life, I will welcome death, that I may cease from sinning, and offending my God?*" This Resolution may be a great comfort in all our perplexities. It gives an acceptable satisfaction to Solomon's sad Question, *Who can say, I have made mine heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*



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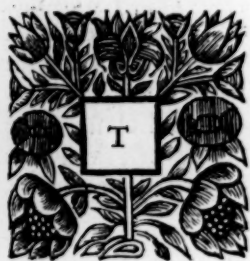
SERMONS

On Prov. xxx. 7, 8, 9.

Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die.

Remove far from me vanity and lyes; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Left I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.



HIS passage of Scripture, 'tis a Sacred and Holy Meditation of *Agur*, an holy Prophet, living in the Church of God, about *Solomon's* Time: And it being (as all other sacred Prophecies, and parts of Scripture) not of private use, or Interpretation, but inspired by the Authour of all heavenly Truth, and propounded as an Oracle to the Church of God; and being suitable for Matter and Form of expression, to the Book of the *Proverbs*, pithy and sententious, *Solomon* recollects it. And as he gathered all the hallowed and dedicated

things of the Worthies before him, and brought them into the Temple; so he doth *comportare*, make a collection of these sacred Sentences, and inserts them into the Canon and Body of Scripture, and puts them upon Record for the benefit of the Church. How many Volumes of Humane Literature are perished and lost? *Solomon's* Tractates of Natural Philosophy are gone and forgotten: His Books of Physick, and Cures of Diseases, some say, *Hezekiah* burnt and abolished them; because the People ascribed too much to them, to the neglect of God. But the least parcel of Scripture hath a Patent of Eternity. The Law was written in Stone, and kept in an Ark of Wood that would not putrifie, to shew and shadow forth the lasting perpetuity of it.

The Penman and Instrument of this sacred Prophecy, is said to be *Agur* the Son of *Jakeh*, no where mentioned in Scripture, but in this place. However we are certain of the Authour, the Spirit of Truth, and then our Faith need not be anxious, who was the Instrument. We question not, nor doubt of the Letter and Hand-writing of our Friend; because, may be, he is a stranger that brings it to us. And Scripture (saith *Hilary*) is *Epistola Creatoris ad creaturam*, a Letter sent to the Church from the God of Heaven. What though the Messenger flee away like the Prophet from *Jehu*? or the Spirit take him from us, as it did *Philip* from the *Eunuch*? yet, if we find

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Serm. I. God's hand-writing, and Seal, the character of his Spirit in it, though the Messenger be unknown to us, we must embrace and adore it. Many parts of Scripture have not the Names of the Prophets that penned them, nor need they: the Secretary's name adds not credit and authority to the Kings Letters and Mandates. All Writs issue out in the King's Name; *Teste meipso*, witness our selves in Heaven, ratifies all Scripture. And that 'tis Holy and Sacred, doth appear by the Materials and Ingredients of which it consists; all of them the language of Scripture, the breathings of God's Spirit. The hand may be the hand of *Esau*; but the voice is the voice of *Jacob*, God speaks in it. First, Here is an holy and humble Confession of Sin, and natural corruption. *Ver. 2. Surely, I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man in me.* Secondly, Here is an holy and Religious Profession of his Faith in God, and belief in his word, *Verse 4. Who hath ascended up to Heaven, or descended? Every Word of God is pure, add not unto his Word.*

Thirdly, Here is an holy and devout Prayer and Petition in the words of my Text. Fourthly, Here are holy and heavenly Rules and Directions for the ordering of our Life and Conversation in the rest of the Chapter.

The Text is a Summary, short compendious Prayer and Supplication, that this Holy Man makes in his own behalf. And though it runs in personal terms, yet it is of common and universal use: *Specialiter dictum, generaliter sapit.* We have the same necessities of nature, and the same spirit of Faith and Prayer that he had. There is great use of the more private and personal Prayers of God's Saints in Scripture. *Jacob's* Vow, when he took his journey, *If the Lord will be with me*; his thankful profession, when he returned, *I am less than the least of all thy mercies*; *Hannah's* supplication in her distress; *David's* humility when *Shimei* reviled him, and *Michal* mocked him, *I will yet be more vile*; *Solomon's* wish and choice, Wisdom rather than Riches; *Job's* patient Profession, *Naked came I out of my Mother's womb, and naked shall I return*; *Old Simeon's* dying Devotion: all these were in personal terms, but penn'd and propounded, as models and patterns of Prayer and Devotion. There should be an holy *ὑποψυχὴ*, and succession of the same spirit of Grace in the successions of the Church and Saints of God. We should strive, that the Talent, which by death is taken from such a Saint, may be given to us. How happy were it, as it was said of *Elisha*, *The Spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha*: so it may be said of Christians in after-times, the Spirit of *Jacob* in his Vow rests upon such a man; the spirit of *Job* in his patience and meekness rests upon such a man; the spirit of *Simeon* in his willingness to die; the Spirit of *Agur* in his moderation and contentation rests upon such a Christian. 'Tis our Duty then to incorporate and work this Prayer into our hearts, to appropriate it to our personal condition, and to make it our own.

This Prayer of this holy man stands upon three Particulars.

First, Is a Summary Proposition of this his prayer, *Ver. 7. Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die.*

Secondly, Is a particular expression of this his Petition, *Ver. 8. Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches.*

Thirdly, Is an effectual enforcement of his Prayer by the Motives and Grounds that stirred him up to make it, *Ver. 9. Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the LORD? or, lest I be poor and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.*

First, Is the Summary Proposal of his Prayer and request by way of Preface, and to make entrance into it. In it observe three Particulars:

First, Is the Form of his Prayer, *I have required them of thee, deny me them not.*

Secondly, Is the Matter and Sum of his Prayer, what he prays for, *Two things.*

Thirdly, Is the Date and Season that he sets unto his Request, for the obtaining of his suit, *Before I die.*

First, The Form of his Prayer is set forth in a double expression:

I. One in these words, *I have required of thee.*

II. Another in these, *Deny me them not.* And with this latter he seems to back, and strengthen, and set an edge upon the former.

I. *I have required of thee*, that is the first expression. Besides the general nature of Prayer, it makes us suiters and petitioners. *Agur*, and *Solomon*, and all, must stretch out empty

empty hands for supply from above. And the right aim and direction of this prayer, *Serm. I.*
 'tis to God the Sovereign, to whom this homage and tribute is due, the sole possessor of Heaven and Earth. He runs not to any Creature. The Church of the Jews never knew any Invocation, but to God only, placed no Altar by God's Altar. Being to beg his bread and sustenance, he doth not, as Christ speaks in the Gospel, run to his neighbours house, calls not upon any Saint, lend me three loaves; no, they are abed and asleep, they can neither help nor hear us. 'Tis he that gives food to all flesh, *Psal. cxxxvi. 25.* The bruit beasts may teach us this prayer, to know the Master of the Crib, who it is that feeds us. *The young Lyons seek their meat from God, Psal. civ. 21. The young Ravens cry to him, Psal. cxlvii. 9. The eyes of all wait upon him, for their meat in due season, Psal. cxlv. 15.*

To pass by these, incident in every Prayer: The Form and Manner of expression, *I have required*, gives us an hint of a threefold Observation:

1. It is *Oratio personalis*, a personal Petition.
2. 'Tis *Oratio deliberata*, a deliberate and advised Petition.
3. 'Tis *Oratio repetita*, 'twas his usual prayer, his frequent Petition.

1. 'Tis *Oratio personalis*, runs in personal terms; *I, Me.* Although it be intended for publick use and benefit; yet is it set out in these terms of singularity. Observe it briefly, *The Saints of God have not contented themselves with common and Publick Prayers, but they have abounded in private and personal supplication.* Indeed, the publick worship is of primary dignity, in the midst of the great Congregation, in the Communion of Saints, in the publick Assemblies. *David* abounded in private prayers. Oh! but yet he longed to worship with God's People in the Temple. And Christ frames a comprehensive Prayer; Our, Us: either with all, or at least for all. But yet the exigences of the Saints are such, as not only publick, but private, and personal Prayers, are useful and necessary.

1. 'Tis a great trial of the Truth, and sincerity of our Devotion. Formality, or Law, or Hypocrisie, may bring thee to Church, as well as Devotion. Players upon the Stage will act passionately. But, if thou canst withdraw thy self from the eye, and observation of all men, and betake thy self with *Isaac* into the Fields, with *Peter* to thy Chamber, and there commune with thy God, and worship him in secret, offer him a free-will-offering in private, that gives good evidence of thy sincerity.

2. The many varieties of wants, unto which Christians are subject, enforces them to personal Devotions, besides common Supplications. 'Tis not possible in any publick Form to comprehend all personal necessities. Thou hast sin, that doth most of all annoy thee, that thou wouldst fain over-master; thou sufferest a temptation, which doth more than ordinarily vex and distract thee; thou standest in need of Grace in a fuller measure; many temporal occasions of sorrow, fears, cares, these thou wouldst unbo-
 some thy self of to thy God; the prayers of the whole Church cannot descend to these particularities. *Every man that knows the plague of his own heart, saith Solomon, must accordingly make prayer and supplication.* That man's Religion is scandalous, that so attends private Prayer, as to neglect the Church; that man's Devotion is suspicious, that is all for the publick, and knows no use or necessity of private petition. That's the first, 'tis *Personalis oratio*.

2. 'Tis *Oratio deliberata*. *I have required*; it implies deliberation, and forethought, and resolution in his Petition. This Prayer of *Azur* was no sudden passionate wish (many men have present flashes of Devotion, some pangs and fits of Piety; Oh! but they are ungrounded, unadvised, and so vanishing presently) but a serious deliberate Prayer. And serious deliberation is necessary here,

1. In the general nature of a Prayer.

2. Out of the particular condition of this Prayer.

1. In general. 'Tis not Prayer, if it be not advised and deliberate. True Prayer is *Sermotatus in pectore*, bred in the breast, not in the tongue's end only. *David* shews the nature of prayer: *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*, *Psal. lvii. 7.* Before he enters upon that duty, he resolves himself of it, *Psal. xcii. 1.* 'Tis a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD: he forecasts it in his mind, and resolves upon it. What are most mens Prayers? only flashes of devotion sudden wishes; as *Lord have mercy upon us; God be thanked for all his Blessings; God send us the light of Heaven; The Lord send rain, if it be his will; 'Tis a sickly time, the*

Serm. I. Lord bleſs us, &c. Theſe are *Optiones*, not *Orationes*, that never mount upward: Like the fluttering of a Bird, whoſe wings are clipt, it never takes its flights, and ſoars up to heaven.

Wicked men have had exceeding good wiſhes, as *Balaam*; and holy men have been overtaken with exceeding bad ones, as *Jonah*, *Job*, and others. No, prayer is another matter, it recalls and recollects the ſoul, frames, and bends the heart, aims and fixes the eye upon God, as *David*, *Pſal. xxvii. 4. One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that I will ſeek after.*

2. This particular Petition requires deliberation and reſolution. He will not have it conceived as a raſh, unadviſed motion. To renounce the World and the riches of it, to be content with a mean Eſtate, no more than for neceſſities, few men will think ſuch a prayer to be in good earneſt. To neglect wealth and abundance, nay, to pray againſt it, to deſire God not to heap too much upon him, to abate of his portion; with *Daniel* to reſuſe the King's delicacies, and to chooſe to live on Pulſe; with *Paul*, to take pleaſure in neceſſities; who will think this man ſpeaks adviſedly? Yes, yes, *Agur* will have us know, he hath made it his ſuit, and he will ſtand to it. 'Tis no raſh pang of ſeeming mortification; but after deep thoughts and conſideration, he hath ſat down and caſt the charges. This is true mortification indeed. As *Paul* contents not himſelf once to renounce all things for Chriſt, *Phil. iii. 7. I count all things loſs for Chriſt*, but he redoubles and ſeals up his word, *yea doubtleſs I count all things but loſs, nay dung*. Sudden wiſhes, and indeliberate proffers, and attempts to renounce the world, they are like *Orpah*, ſhe makes a proffer to go with *Naomi*, but bethinks her ſelf, and goes back again: But deliberate prayers and reſolutions, are like *Ruth*, ſhe cannot be put back again, ſhe will live and dye in that reſolution. See how Chriſt rejects this extemporary mortification, when men will in a good mood abandon the world, *Matth. viii. 19. One, all in haſte, will forſake all, Follow Chriſt, whereſoever he goes*. Jeſus puts him back, *The Foxes have holes, the Birds of the air have neſts, the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*; and ſo departs. That's the ſecond: *Agur's* prayer, 'tis *Oratio deliberata*.

3. 'Tis *Oratio repetita*; 'Tis his prayer which he hath made and will make; his daily, cuſtomary, frequent ſuit and petition. 'Tis a third Character of his religious devotion. He abounds in this duty, ſets himſelf the daily taſk of commencing this prayer, and of ſoliciting God to the granting of his deſire. This frequency of prayer it is requiſite;

(1.) In general: In all the prayers we put up to God. There is no mercy almoſt ſo eaſily atchieved, but it will coſt many ſuits for the obtaining of it.

1. Prayer, as it is a ſervice done to God, requires frequency. 'Tis not like an Homage done once to the King, at his firſt entrance and Inauguration, but 'tis a daily Tribute; the *juge ſacrificium*, the daily ſacrifice. The fire of this Altar never ſhould go out: *Daniel's* thrice-a-day prayer, *David's* ſeven times a day, ſhews the diligence and conſtancy of this worſhip and ſervice.

2. This frequency argues a delight and joy in this worſhip; and 'tis a ſign of a wicked man, that he takes no comfort or joy in God, when he is ſo ſeldom in this action, *Job xxvii. 15. Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* And God charges it upon the *Jews*, that they grew weary of this ſervice, and diſuſed it, and gave it over, *Iſai. xliii. 22. Thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael*. As they in *Malachi* cryed out, *Chap. i. 13. Behold, what a wearineſs is it?* Whereas all ſpiritual prayer delights it ſelf in frequency, rejoyces alwayes to come into God's preſence. But,

(2.) In particular, this prayer of *Agur* muſt have an edge and ſtrength put upon it by frequency and conſtancy. It is a prayer againſt worldly mindedneſs, it ſeeks and ſues for the grace of Contentation. The ſubduing of that corruption, the attaining of that heavenly Temper, is not eaſily compaſſed. A few prayers will not ſerve the turn. Indeed for ſome rare men, that are not acquainted with this corruption, they may be more ſecure. As *Luther* profeſſes of himſelf, He never felt a temptation of covetouſneſs. God had framed his heart againſt that ſin. But for moſt, 'tis a ſin that hangs faſteſt on, it grows upon a man. And therefore we muſt do in this caſe, as they that will dig up a Tree deeply rooted, we muſt ſet to it again, it is not

not one stroke or pull that will root it up. The world hath many snares, and will twist about thee. This sin, Serm. I.

1. It is a lasting sin; like some seeds, sow them but once, and they will always grow and multiply.

2. It is a sober sin, and no beastly lust; as Drunkenness.

3. It is a rational sin, it pleads with many Arguments:

(1.) They are God's blessings. We cannot have too much of them.

(2.) We must provide for hereafter, secure our selves from contempt and want; lay up for posterity.

(3.) 'Tis the Wise man's practice, all the world runs this way. How need we with Paul pray and beseech the Lord against these buffetings.

That's the first expression, *I have required of thee*. Now follows the other.

II. *Deny me them not*. That seconds, and backs, and enforces his former Petition. And we will resolve the strength, and purpose of this Petition into these expressions.

1. *Deny me them not*, or withhold them not from me. It ascribes unto God *absolutam potestatem*: It is a real confession and acknowledgment of his absolute power and sovereign dominion over all these blessings, that his prayer look'd at. All are in his hands. He, the supreme Lord. The least grain of Grace, the smallest crumb of bread, any drop of comfort, all are his own, in his hand and disposal. This David acknowledges, 1 Chron. xxix. 12. *Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all*. So Moses, Deut. x. 19. *Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that is therein*. So Psal. xxiv. 1. *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein*.

The use and benefit of them he may allow us, but the dominion and original Title he holds in his own hand, as a part of his prerogative and flower of his Crown. He claims and challenges this to himself, Ezek. xvi. 19. *My meat, my fine flower, and oil, and honey, all his*. So Hag. ii. 8. *The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts*. Chrysostom professes he often smiled to read the wills of rich men in their Bequeathments: *I give the dominion and title of such Lands to such an one*; the *usum fructum* to such another, he shall be supreme Lord of them, another shall reap the profits of them: whereas we all have the use. *Πάντες τὸν Χριστὸν ἔχομεν, διακονοῦντες ἑκάστῳ*, saith the Father.

The due consideration of this would keep us from over-much Lording it in our goods and possessions. Thy Tenure is but Frank-almoine; the best are meer beneficiaries, the supreme right rests still in God. This we may see in God's order of Creation. All Creatures were made before man, the World was stored with riches before man was created. Man is younger Brother to all the Creatures, a *post-natus* to this Title. Nay, to teach us, that we hold in service from him, he expresses his Lordship in Man's Creation. At the making of all other Creatures, Moses calls him God; God created the heaven and the earth, &c. But the Lord God created man of the dust of the ground, Gen. ii. 7. He assumes to himself the Lordship, lest man should usurp it.

2. *Deny them me not*; it ascribes to God *efficacem donationem*. His denial, 'tis an effectual with-holding; his granting, 'tis a real collation, and possessing us of them. Mens grants are empty and verbal oft-times, they cannot always put us into the possession of what they intend to us; and mens denials too are often insufficient. But God's Word is powerful. If he say nay to our desires, denies his consent to our motions, no toy, no labour can compass our ends, Job xi. 10. *If he cut off, or shut up, or gather together, who can hinder him?* Without his grant, 'tis in vain for you to rise up early, and to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow, Psal. cxxvii. 2. If he deny thee the power of getting any blessing, see how unsuccessful and bootless your labours will be, Hag. i. 6. *I have sown much and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled; you cloath you, but there is no warmth, and he that earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes. He blows upon it*, Vers. 9. He says not Amen to thy desires. God's not denying is not a bare permission, to turn us loose to shift for our selves; but 'tis a real effectual furnishing of us.

It must teach us to know the power of his Word, the efficacy of his grants, the force

Serm. 1. force of his denial. It would make us in all our businesses begin at the right end, ask his leave and allowance, take him along with us in all our pursuits. It hath made the Saints of God first to consult with him, to get his allowance; as good *Jehoshaphat*, *Let's ask at the mouth of the LORD*; like *David*, he calls for the Ephod, *Shall I go out? wilt thou go with me?* So *Moses* deters the People from entering upon the Land of *Canaan*; *Go not up, the Lord is not among you*, Numb. xiv. 42. Even *Balaam* had this wisdom, to ask leave of God. If he be against us, he takes off the wheels of the Chariots, makes them drive heavily, no pursuits are prosperous. If *Jonah*, against Gods Word, will to *Tarshish*, a strong ship shall not secure him; to *Niniveh*, a devouring fish shall convey him. See how *Balaam* sped, *Thy God hath kept thee from preferment*. At thy word, *Master*, saith *Peter*, *we will cast in the net*.

Take we heed then how we sacrifice to our own nets, and burn incense unto our own Drag, Hab. i. 16. how we give the honour and thanks of our attainments to second causes, to our own wits, power, industry: *how we kiss our own hand*, Job xxxi. 27. that is, ascribe what we have to our own forecast and laboriousness. Remember that of *Solomon*, *'Tis the blessing of the LORD that makes rich*, Prov. x. 22. So Deut. viii. 18. *'Tis God that gives power to get wealth*. Take heed of the *Assyrian's* boasting, *He saith, by the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent, and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants of the earth, as a valiant man*, Isa. x. 13. Learn rather the Language of *Eleazar*; *God hath blest my Master greatly, and he is thereby become great; he hath given him flocks, and herds, and gold, and silver, and servants*, Gen. xxiv. 35. The Language of *Job*, *The LORD hath given*, Chap. i. 21. the Language of *Jacob*, *The Children that God of his grace hath given me*, Gen. xxxiii. 5. Say with *St. Paul*, Rom. xi. 36. *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen*.

That's the second expression; it ascribes to God *efficacem donationem*.

3. *Deny them me not*, Supply my life with necessities, it implies *personalem distributionem*. The Faith of this holy man relies not upon common providence; but sues for a special particular personal provision. 'Tis next to Atheism and plain Infidelity, to ascribe to God only a common providence, that he doth in the general furnish the World, and store it with sufficiency, so leaving us to our own industry, catch that catch can, and make it our own. No, Faith sees God near at hand, places him not in the circle of Heaven, barely beholding men scattered on the face of the earth, and foraging for themselves. No, his providence and care, *perinet ad singulos*. He hath a personal eye open, and ear bow'd down, and hand stretched out to every one. In our coming into the world, *in his book were all our members written*; in our dwellings he leaves us not loose, but *hath determined the bounds of our habitation*. We live all upon his finding. In common plenty he can punish with personal scarcity; as he did the Prince of *Samaria*. In general scarcity, he can furnish with personal plenty; as *Elijah* did the *Sareptan* Widow.

And this differenceth the Faith of a good Christian from the belief of a carnal man in God's administrations. A worldly man, may be, allows God a general inspection, thinks he *holds up the Pillars of the earth*, but perceives not that God takes care of Particulars, and so resolves to live by his wits, and shift for himself. But a good Christian sees him at home, and so casts himself into his arms, and receives every comfort as reach'd out of Heaven by God's immediate hand.

That's the third expression, and implies *personalem distributionem*.

4. *Deny them me not*, it implies *sanctam importunitatem*, 'tis a speech of earnestness and holy importunity. 'Tis *indoles fidei*, the holy confidence that Faith hath in Gods gracious inclination to it; it delights to be importunate; it will admit no denials, take no nay at God's hands. A wicked worldly man is utterly ignorant of this holy art of getting in with God. If God answer not presently, he flings off from God, as the King of *Israel*, *Why should I wait for the Lord any longer*, 2 Kings vi. 33.

(1.) Out of a listlessness to pray; 'tis dull and harsh to a carnal man, no relish, no favour in it; oh! to a Saint 'tis marrow and fatness.

(2.) Out of a strangeness with God: A man may be bold and importunate with

with his Friend, and so Christians are with God, whom they know *de proximo*. But worldly men have no such interest, they cannot press upon him. Serm. I.

(3.) There is a secret guiltiness in the hearts of wicked men, that damps all their devotion; their hearts misgive them, that they shall not be accepted. But Faith in a Christian fastens upon God, *strives and fights in prayer*, as St. Paul calls it; *wrestles with him*, as Jacob, *I will not let thee go*. Oh! *Hæc vis Deo grata est*. God loves to be urged with this holy importunity. The *Canaanitish* Woman, her clamouring after Christ (as the Disciples called it) was musick in Christ's ears. Yet, though Faith, it will not be denied, it will limit its desires. As *Bathsheba*, though Solomon would not deny her, yet she sits down with a negative.

1. Importunity must be with submission, if convenient, as she yields to Solomon; *I will not say thee Nay*, yet he did so, 1 Kings ii. 20.

2. It must go no further than a Promise. Faith laying hold of a promise, may be bold and importunate.

3. When God declares his peremptory denial, then we must rest satisfied. As *Moses* often besought God to let him go into the Land of *Canaan*; but after express denial (*Speak no more to me of this matter*) he gives over.

So much of the Form of *Agur's* Prayer, *I have required them of thee, deny them me not*. The next is,

Secondly, The Matter and Sum of his Petition; *Two things*. Strange! is this all the compass and extent of his desires? It may seem,

I. To strengthen the bounty and fulness of God. Hast thou but two blessings to bestow? No doubt, he hath store of mercies.

II. To strengthen the virtue and efficacy of prayer? can it reach but to two mercies? It is *Conclus & Promus Cæli*, set over all God's Store-houses; 'tis the Key, that opens all his Treasuries. There is no mercy shut up from prayer. It hath a kind of omnipotency; *Whatsoever ye shall ask, believe, and it shall be done*. 'Tis *organum operum*, as an hand fit for all works. Prayer will enlarge it self in all manner of supplications; *In all things, let your Prayer be made known*. Or,

III. Is it *Pudor & verecundia orationis*? as if seldom asking, and for a few favours, would move God to grant. 'Tis so among men; not to be troublesome, to ask seldom, makes men to grant. And carnal men think it good manners, not to be troublesome to God. As *Ahaz* would not trouble God to work miracles. *Non vult divine misericordiae oneri esse*. No, God delights in frequent Petitions; like a living Fountain, the oftner drawn, the more it springs. God never stops in giving, till we stop in praying. The Widows Vessels fail before the Oil failed.

What means then holy *Agur* in summing up his desires into this small number, reducing them to two?

1. *Two things*: Take the Petitions in the full extent and latitude; *Remove from me vanity and lies, feed me with food convenient for me*; so they are reducible to the two main Heads and Principles of all desires;

1. The good of the Soul.

2. The good of the Body.

1. *Remove from me vanity and lies*; that provides for the Soul and the spiritual estate; purge, sanctifie that.

2. *Feed me with food convenient for me*; that provides for the Body, the outward man, and our natural condition. God hath two hands; he hath the blessings of his right hand in spiritual graces, and the blessings of his left hand in temporal mercies. And answerably, Faith hath two hands; stretches out its right hand, *Oh! keep me from sin*; then its left hand; *feed me with food convenient*. So Paul tells us of two promises made to Religion, the *promise of this life*, and of *that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. The principal indeed, that's the Soul; but then the Body hath its share. It was the Heathens wish, *Mentem sanam in corpore sano, a sober mind in a sound body*: Whereas most men pray, as if they were all body, no soul: all for health, and food, and outward comforts.

2. *Two things*; He reduces his desires and prayers, to a narrow compass. He is solicitous *de necessariis*; takes no thought of superfluities. In outward and temporal

Serm. I. poral blessings, 'tis Christian wisdom to cut short, and contract our desires into a narrow room. A tolerable passage through the world, and a comfortable passage out of the world; here is all a Christian seeks after. As the *Israelites* said to the King of *Edom*, *Let's but go through your high way in peace*. Whereas the wishes, and distractions, and cravings of carnal men, they are infinite and endless. *They enlarge their desires as Hell*, Hab. ii. 5. As *Augustine* shews the multiplying wishes of Parents for their children, *An pulchri, an ingeniosi, an Divites, an Honorati*? Faith answers all; a few things, two things necessary only. Whatsoever is more than this, 'tis *ex malo*, it comes from evil.

3. *Two things*; he sues for especially, more frequently, they were his daily petitions; *Keep me from vanity and lies*: He prayed against all sin, his spight was not only against these; True, yet those sins the spirit of this holy man did more loath and abhor. He desired all graces and virtues, and all fitting comforts; but, above all, contentation with a little. A Child of God, though he must abound in all manner of Prayer; yet 'tis his practice and wisdom to fix especially upon some chief requests. Dost thou find thy self more prone to such a sin? less disposed to such a duty? Double thy Prayers here, bestow cost upon this necessary duty. As *Chrysostome* was so zealous against swearing, that in every Sermon he inveighed against it. *St. John* addicted to the love of Christ, all his Epistles beat upon that. *St. Paul* so deeply affected with the Grace of Christ, that it colours all his writings, every page falls upon this. Know what sins thou art most inclined to, what Graces thou most standest in need of; and let thy Prayers strive against those sins, and wrestle for those Graces. Art thou voluptuous? art thou covetous? art thou revengeful? then say, *Two things I require*. *David's* love to God's House had the pre-eminence of all his Petitions; *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that I may visit his Temple*.

So I have done with the second Particular, in the proposal of his Petition, the Matter and Sum of his Prayer, which is for *two things*. Come we now to the third; which is,

Thirdly, The Date and Season, that he sets to his desires, *Until I die; Tantisper dum vivo*. And this measure and proportion of time in his Prayer, it hath a double use:

- I. 'Tis a term of Extension.
- II. 'Tis a term of Limitation.

There is a length in it, and there is a stint and period in it.

I. Let's see the Extension and length, that is in this scantling, *Until I die*; and here is a twofold Extension:

1. Here is *Extensio necessitatis*. It sets out unto us the length and continuance of our state of necessities and dependencies. We cannot be exempted from the casualties of outward things: may be now rich, anon, or hereafter poor: now we may have a competency; ere we die, by course of natural causes, we may come to beggary. To all men, in general, this life, 'tis the vale of mutabilities and changes: no stability, no certainty. *Solomon* tells us, *Eccles. ix. 11. &c. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favours to men of skill; but time, and chance happens to them all: for man also knows not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them*. *David* a King, thought himself settled, his hill was so strong, how soon was he troubled? *Psal. xxx. 7. Job* thought he should die in his nest, in constant prosperity, yet how overcast? *Solomon's* counsel is good, *Prov. xxvii. 1. Boast not thy self of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*. An elegant similitude; as if a Woman should boast she shall have such a Child, a man, or fair, or wise; no, thou knowest not what shall be the fruit of thy womb. Remember *Haman's* change, little thought he to hang on his own Gallows. Little knowest thou what is in the womb of the night, or what will be the fruit of the morning. *Until I die*;

2. Here is *Extensio fidei*. *Agur's* Faith by Prayer provides for his estate, until he die.

dye. 'Tis true, our life naturally is full of varieties; I, but Faith provides for it by a blessed dependancy upon God. Here is the fathom of Faith, secures a mans estate, even till death. Men without Faith, though full of projects, in truth live all at a venture, *ex tempore*, without this forecast. Here is the art of a Christian. Is this life so full of hazards? may I be now rich? e're I die, a Beggar? I will engage my self by Faith and Prayer, and holy reliance on God's care; *Take thou care of me till I die*, Psal. xlviii. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death*; as Merchants fearing Shipwrack, go to the Assuring-house; what e're comes, they shall not lose all. A Ship that rides at anchor, fastened to a Rock, cannot be cast away: Faith casts anchor in God, provides for the whole life: *Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength fails*.

Having viewed the Extension:

II. Let's see the Limitation. *Before I die*; 'tis *Terminus limitationis*; it hath the use and purpose of a stint and bound, and due limitation.

1. *Before I die*; 'tis *limitatio orationis*, I must enquire and beg of thee, till I die. This life indeed is, or should be most spent in Prayer, and unfolding our desires. We are yet but Petitioners and cravers; I, but that duty hath its date. When we die, we take our leave of Prayer, and change it to a more chearful and comfortable exercise of Praise and Thanksgiving. In this Valley of wants and tears, all our help and comfort is to cry and call to God. The many necessities of soul and body, keep this Duty in action and use; but Heaven is the holy hill of Thanksgiving. Faith and Prayer are the lame man's stilts or crutches, they pass us over to Heaven, and leave us. Then *Peribit labor, & gemitus*; *transcunt orationes, succedunt laudationes*, Aug. Then we shall say with the Martyr, Farewel Faith; farewel Hope; welcome Love: then shall we turn our *Hosannas* into *Hallelujahs*.

2. *Before I die*, 'tis *limitatio sollicitudinis*. See here Agur solicitous for supplies of life, *Feed me with food convenient*; I, 'tis but *tantisper*, whilst he lives. True, say you, that's the bound of all our desires; who looks beyond death? Yes, ye; This stint of time hath a virtue in it.

1. The explicit thoughts of it seasons all our desires and cravings; in thy cares to think all these comforts must end in death, it will moderate, sanctifie, eat out the carnality and worldliness of them. This sad thought, *All my gettings be but to bring me to my long home, but to last me to my grave*; it would put a blessed temper into thee, and cause thee to say, in the heat of all thy pursuits, as the Widow of Sarepta to Elijah, 1 King. xvii. 12. *I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress this handful of Meal, and the little Oyl that remains, for me and for my son, that we may eat it and die*. And as it will season; so,

2. It will proportion all our desires; *I desire but till I die*: then what should I do with more than will serve for my passage? Mariners freighting for a near haven, will not victual, as for a long voyage. At the farthest our voyage is not long, and a fair wind may give me speed. Wilt thou lade thy self with provision beyond all likelihood of expence? *Magno viatico breve iter non instruitur, sed oneratur. Tempus in contracto est. Brethren, the time is short, it remains that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passes away*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

So I have done with the first particular in the Text, viz. the Summary proposal of his Prayer: Come we now to the second, which is,

Secondly, The Particular expressing and unfolding of his Prayer, Verse 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me*. Here we have the expression of his two main capital desires and petitions.

First, The first, that respects his soul and spiritual estate, and the welfare of it. A prayer for freedom from sin and impiety, *Remove far from me vanity and lies*.

Secondly, The second, that respects his body, and temporal estate, and the welfare of it. A Prayer for a competency and necessary provision for this present life; *Feed me with food convenient for me*. These two, freedom from sin, and freedom

From

from

Serm. **I** from worldly cares and distractions, that we may cleave to the Lord without distraction, 'tis *Agur's* Prayer, and ought to be the sum of every good Christians desires and Prayers.

Before we come to the particulars; the method and order of this holy man's devotion is observable. There is an holy art of framing our Petitions in a right order. What's the first, and the great, and principal desire of a Christian, that takes up his chiefest thoughts, that which hath the birth-right of his Devotions? 'Tis his Prayer for spiritual graces and blessings, that hath the precedency. *Keep far from me vanity and lies.* And this Petition hath the first place for divers reasons.

I. *Hæc petitio respicit animam*; he provides for his soul in this Prayer. And the Soul of a man, and the care for it, must have the precedency, as being the principal, chiefest, noblest part of man. The excellency of a man is his Soul and Spirit; that by which he exceeds all other Creatures; his immortal and divine part. Great reason the first and chiefest of our cares should be for it. The Body is the Servant; the Soul, that's the Master and Lord of the Body. And Christ shews us, *Luke xvii. 7, 8.* who must be first served, the Master or the Servant, *Will any man say to his Servant, first go, and sit down to meat? and will not rather say, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thy self, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink.* Abraham's Servant refused to refresh himself, till he had dispatched his Master's work. And shall the Body that is *servus*, and *jumentum animæ*, be first taken thought for, and our soul neglected?

II. *Hæc petitio respicit salutem æternam*, 'tis a Prayer that concerns salvation, and our eternal estate; that's *maximum bonum*, the chiefest good, and that challenges the first place in all our desires. Freedom from Sin, that provides for eternity, that secures our immortal welfare: freedom from worldly cares and perplexities, that's a security only for our transitory and momentary condition. 'Tis our wisdom, first to provide for perpetuity, that that estate which is endless and everlasting, may be made happy to us; then in the second place, thou mayest take care for the present. Men bestow more cost upon that which is their own for ever, than they will upon that which they hold only for a term of years, that soon will be expired.

III. This Petition hath the precedency, because the granting of this request brings with it the granting also of the second Petition for temporal blessings. Freedom from Sin, and supply of Grace, hath the promise of temporal welfare entailed unto it; *Godliness hath the promise of this life*, *1 Tim. iv. 8.* *Accessorium sequitur principale.* He that enjoys the principal, shall enjoy all the Appurtenances that belong to it. Our Saviour teaches us this art of Prayer, *Matth. vi. 33.* He that sees mens thoughts taken up with these cares, *What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewith shall we be clothed?* These are the chiefest thoughts of men. No, the way is, faith Christ, *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* The inversion will not hold; *First, seek food and rayment, and Grace and Heaven shall be added.* Heaven is no accessory additament, but a principal. God never flings Heaven into the bargain; but temporal things are given in over and above. Thus *Solomon* got riches and honour, by asking Grace and Wisdom in the first place, *1 King. ii. 1.* *The Speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing; I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, riches and honour.* Learn to begin at the right end, *Rom. viii. 32.*

IV. This Petition hath the precedency; before he prays for necessary food for the comforts of this life, he makes his Prayer first against his sins. Till they be removed, they hinder our access to any temporal blessing. The least sin unremoved, makes us unworthy of the least comfort. A sinner cannot with any comfort or confidence reach out his hand for a morsel of bread. Indeed God, in the course of common Providence, allows wicked men supplies of life: *He fills their bellies with hid treasures*, *Psal. xvii. 14.* When his enemies hunger, he feeds them; when they thirst, he gives them drink. But with favour and fatherly allowance he gives us these comforts when sin is removed. *Joseph* first reconciles himself to his Brethren; then sets them at his table. The Father first pardons his Prodigal; then kills the fatted Calf for him. Wouldest thou be fed, as God feeds the Beasts; nay, his enemies, whom he reserves to the day of slaughter? then rush upon this Petition; but if as a Child, then beg first removal of Sin.

Object.

Object. *But, in the Lord's Prayer, first we beg Bread, then Pardon of Sins?*

Serm. I.

Answer ;

1. That Holy Prayer is framed for those that be actually reconciled, and can call God Father ; the main fundamental, forgiveness is obtained, and presupposed. Indeed, our daily failings must be daily bewailed.

2. Before we beg Bread, we seek Gods Glory, his Kingdom, obedience to his Will ; then temporal Blessings.

3. Christ's method there frames these Petitions first, which tend to the attaining of some positive good, God's Glory, Kingdom, Grace to do his Will ; after, frames Petitions to deprecate removal of evils.

4. This Prayer in the main drift, 'tis for spiritual things. The three Petitions before, for spirituals ; the three after, for spirituals. This for Bread is placed in the midst, as a *Viaticum*, a bait in our journey to Heaven. A Christian begins at God's Glory, passes on through spiritual Duties, till he ends at God's Glory. *Daily Bread* is like a man's Inn, in the mid-way to relieve and refresh him ; his *diversorium itineris*, for him to bait at.

5. Those after-Petitions, Pardon of Trespases, freedom from Temptations, deliverance from Evil, are to be obtained in this life ; here, or never, Sin must be pardoned, Satan vanquished, evil of sin avoided : therefore a Prayer for this life prefixed, because life is the season and foundation of these things ; *LORD, maintain my life, that I may make sure the pardon of my sins, vanquish Satan, finish my course with joy.*

Notwithstanding these reasons, the priority of our Prayers must be first for pardon of sins : till then, no spiritual Christian right to the comforts of this life.

V. This Petition hath the precedency ; being to pray for competency and contentation, first he prays against these Sins of Vanity and Lies : because these vain and foolish lusts, they are the only causes and provocations to worldly desires. What makes men discontented with a small portion, to murmur at God's dealings, as if he kept them short ? 'Tis the noysomness of vain lusts, that are craving and restless. St. James shews the original of them, *James iv. 1. From whence come wars and fightings ? come they not hence, even out of your lusts that war in your members ? Ye lust and desire to have.* Dost thou desire contentment with any portion ? abate thy vain lusts and desires ; get sober and settled, composed thoughts, and any thing then will give thee satisfaction.

Tantum de ordine.

Thus much for the Method, and order of this Holy man's Devotion.

The Second

S E R M O N

On PROV. XXX. 8.

Remove far from me Vanity and Lyes; —

OME we now to to the particular Petition; *Remove far from me vanity and lyes.* In it two things:

First, Is the Evil he prays against, that's *Vanity and Lies*.
Secondly, Is the Prayer he makes against it, the freedom he desires from it, *Remove it far from me.*

First, The Evil he prays against, *Vanity and Lyes*. Commonly, in Scripture, they are put for the same thing. And then in Scripture we meet with a double Vanity. *Vanity* is taken,

I. In a Natural sense.

II. In a Moral and Vicious sense.

I. In a Natural sense, and so every Creature is said to be vain; and that in a double degree:

1. There is *Vanity in Origine*; in the very being and nature of it; there is a vanity in the Creature, a weakness and impotency, and emptiness and insufficiency in it, compared with, and divided from God. Every Creature in his best condition hath a seed of *Vanity* and weakness in it. The Original of all things was *Nil*, made of Nothing; and that which came out of Nothing, inclines of it self unto Nothing. Nothing, 'tis *seminarium vanitatis*, the spawn of *Vanity*. Every man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity, *Psal. xxxix. 5.* even because our Original is Nothing. *Homo, terræ filius, nihili nepos*; that's our Pedigree.

2. There is in the Creature a lower degree of vanity, a vanity of deficiency, and decay in it, in that 'tis fallen from the Original. Of it self, in its Original, it would have faded; but now by our fall it is blasted with vanity. *All the creatures are now subject unto vanity*, *Rom. viii. 20.* Now all of us are vanity; we are no more *Ish* but *Enosh*; not Strength, but Vanity; the best of us. *Psal. lxii. 9.* *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye, (seeming, but not being.) To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*

That's Natural Vanity.

II. There is a moral, and a vicious, culpable Vanity, and 'tis that *David* speaks of, *Psal. iv. 2.* *O ye sons of men, how long will ye love Vanity, and seek after leasing?* So then take these two words as Identical, or else consider *Lies*, as distinct here from the sin of *Vanity*.

1. Take them together; and so in general, *All sin is vanity*; and a Lie. Piety and Sanctity, and Innocency, 'tis called *Truth*, *John vii. 44.* *The Devil abode not in the Truth*, that is, in his state of innocency and integrity. So *Job*, Chap. xxxi. 5. calls a sinful course, *a walking with vanity*; *If I have walked with vanity*; and *Saint Peter* calls a sinful life *a vain conversation*, *1 Pet. i. 18.* *Redeemed from your vain conversation.* And for a Sinner is called *a vain man*, *Prov. xii. 12.* *He that follows vain persons, is void of understanding.* *2 Chron. xiii. 7.* *There gathered unto him vain men, the Children of Belial*, wicked persons. Thus *David* prayed against all sin: *Lord turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*, *Psal. cxix. 37.* And *Solomon* calls a sinners life, the days of his vanity, *Ecclef. vii. 15.* Sin is Vanity,

(1.) In

(1.) *In origine.* Vanity is the Original of Sin. That very Original of man, that he is made of nothing, a decaying, mutable, fading Creature, is the first womb of sin. Sin draws not its being from God, the Fountain of all solid goodness; but it arises from that deficiency that is inbred in us, by which we tend unto nothing; and so sin is void and empty of any solid, real goodness; 'tis nothing but want, loss, emptiness, defect, decay, privation. All that God made, had fulness of goodness in it; but our sin, it is as rust to Gold, as darkness to the Air, as sickness to the Body, as a stain unto Beauty; 'tis the fading, decaying, vanishing, mouldring away of our glory and excellency. Sin is Vanity,

(2.) *In usu.* A vain meer superfluous thing, it hath no place, nor rank amongst all God's Creatures. All things of God's making are useful and beneficial: Take any out of its place, the world would be maimed and imperfect. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time, Eccles. iii. 11.* Ask not, why is this, or that? for every thing is good in his season. Only Sin is vain and unprofitable; no good or profit in it. That's *vanum*, that serves *nulli usui*. Sin, a meer superfluity, *James i. 21. Lay aside the superfluity of naughtiness.* Paul calls them *the unfruitful works of darkness, Ephes. iv. 11. What profit have you in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, Rom. vi. 21.* Sin is vanity,

(3.) *In exercitio.* Nothing but emptiness and vanity, unsatisfying in the practice of it. In all honest labour, there is some satisfaction. The heart of a man by God's blessing, enjoys some comfort in it; but, he that follows vain persons, shall have no satisfaction. *It is, as when an hungry man dreams, and behold! he eateth; but he awakes, and his soul is empty: or, as when a thirsty man dreams, and behold! he drinks; but he awakes, and behold! he is faint, and his soul hath appetite, Isai. xxix. 8.* This is represented in the food of the Prodigal, he fed on husks; the food of sin, 'tis an empty husk, no soison, or strength of satisfaction in it. Sin is vanity,

(4.) *In effectu.* It makes a man vain. A sinner is a vain Creature, it brings vanity upon him:

1. That's *vanum*, that is *frustra, sine suo excidit*. Sin makes man vain, it frustrates and puts him by his main end. Man was made to a noble end, to serve and enjoy God, and to be united to him; but sin doth disappoint this end, crosses the end and aim of his creation. It made God repent that ever he made man; *Gen. vi. 6. When God saw the wickedness of men, it repented the LORD that he made man in the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.* It makes a man, as if he were created in vain; as David bemoans the vanity of mankind in his haste, *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? Psal. lxxxix. 47.*

2. It brings much vanity upon man, it debases his excellency, makes him as one of the Fools in Israel, *2 Sam. xii. 13.* lays his honour in the dust. It puts into us vain imaginations, *Rom. i. 21. Their cogitations are vain,* their foolish hearts deceive them.

3. It makes men vain, because it frustrates their own desired ends. A sinner is deceived of his own expectations, he shall not obtain his wished-for ends. *Prov. xxii. 8. He that sows iniquity, shall reap vanity. Eccles. v. 16. He hath laboured for the wind, he shall see no good.* Thus Job describes a sinner, *I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not, Chap. xxxiii. 27.* Hence David calls them *lying vanities, Psal. xxxi. He hath travelled with iniquity, and conceived mischief; but he shall bring forth a Lie; that is, the thing he expects shall fail him.* Sin promises much, but in the birth no performance, nothing but a Lie. *In the end, saith Jeremy, he is a Fool, he misses his main aim, labours all in vain. That's extreme folly to miss of his main end, to weary themselves for very vanity, Hab. ii. 13.*

2. Take Lying feveral, and apart, *Agur* prays against it. A sin opposite to that virtue and grace of Truth, which should sanctifie, and season our speech and conversation; when, with all good Conscience, in all our speeches with any man, we be careful to utter nothing but Truth.

For better understanding the nature of this sin, we will take notice of it in a double consideration:

(1.) By consideration of the virtue of Truth, to which Lying is opposite.

(2.) By

Serm. II.

(2.) By consideration of this sin of Falseness, and Lying in it self.

(1.) By considering the virtue of Truth. A Duty strictly required in Scripture. Our Saviour enjoins it, *Let your Yea, be Yea, and your Nay, Nay*, Mat. v. 37. *Put away Lying, and speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another*, Ephes. iv. 25.

For further opening of this so necessary a Duty, let's make these two Enquiries:

1. What this Truth is, and wherein it consists?

2. How it may be uttered; with what conditions and qualifications?

1. *What is Truth?* Pilate asked it scornfully; but the question is profitable.

It stands in three things:

1. It stands in a conformity betwixt our thoughts, and the thing it self of which we speak. We must be careful so to conceive of things, as they are indeed; we must be careful, that our understandings be rightly informed. This *Job* practised, Chap. xxix. 16. *The cause which I knew not, I searched out*. Labour to avoid rash apprehensions.

2. It stands in a conformity of our speech with our thoughts. As we must think as the thing is; so we must speak as we think. Our thoughts must be the image and true representation of the thing; and then our speech must be the image, and true representation of our thoughts. Thus *David* describes it, Psal. xv. 2. *He speaks the truth in his heart. Mentiri, contra mentem ire*.

3. It stands in a desire and purpose of communicating this Truth to those with whom we speak; in a desire of begetting the same knowledge in others, that we have our selves; a desire of giving a just and even information of what we know, and concerns us to manifest.

2. What are those Caveats and Conditions we must observe in speaking the Truth? 'Tis not sufficient for us to speak that which is truth, but there is a graceful manner to be practised in our speech.

1. We must speak truth out of a love of Truth. We must delight in speaking the Truth. We must get an habit of Truth in us, get the Law of Truth into us. Thus *Paul* professes his love to Truth, *We can say nothing against the truth, but for it*, 2 Cor. xiii. 8. We must take a felicity in seasoning our speeches with it. Thus *Solomon*, *A faithful witness speaks truth*, that is, delights in it. It hates backwardness, to be haled and tortured with examinations, ere ever we will speak truth.

2. We must speak truth freely. No fear or discouragement must drive us to swallow down the Truth, or conceal it. Thus those three Worthies in *Daniel*, *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego*, they were not careful, that is, not fearful to answer the King, to profess their meaning. There is an honest boldness, that should attend the truth; we should have an holy confidence, not to shrink from it. Thus *Job* xxvii. 3. *All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit*. This boldness was in *Peter*, Acts iv. 20. *We cannot but speak what we have heard and seen*. Before, he shrunk for fear; we must be valiant for the truth, Jer. ix. 3. He complains, They bend their tongues like Bows for lies, draw a lie up to the head, but are not valiant for the truth.

3. A third condition of Truth is Discretion, and Christian prudence; not unseasonably or unadvisedly to utter all that thou knowest; but as the rule of religious honesty and discretion shall direct us. We must learn the seasonable practice of *Solomon's* rule, Eccles. iii. 7. *There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*. First, for silence, the Young man's time; then to speak, the Aged and Experienced: first, for silence, to deliberate; then after to speak. Hence *David*, Psal. cxli. 3. prays for a door to his lips, and a watch to keep that door. The door must not stand always open; watch who passes out. Thus *Solomon* commends a seasonable word: *They are like Apples of Gold, with Pictures of Silver*. An unseasonable Truth may be as pernicious as an intended Lie.

4. A fourth Condition is: Truth must be uttered in charity and love, and with intendment of good to our Brother. *Follow the Truth in love*, Ephes. iv. 10. *Love in the truth*, saith *John*. Neither truth without love, nor love without truth. As charity rejoiceth in the truth, so truth should joyce in charity. A man may speak the

the truth maliciously, to do mischief by it. There may be *veritas homicida*. As *Doeg*, 1 Sam. xxii. 9. makes a true, but yet a malicious Relation of *David's* intercourse with *Abiathar*. He murdered the Priests with a malicious truth. *His tongue was a sharp rasour*. So the *Ziphims* reported truly, but yet maliciously of *David*. In speaking, seek the good, not the hurt of our Brethren. The false Apostles preach'd the Truth of ill-will, *Phil. i. 15*.

Vidimus virtutem oppositam, Truth. The nature of the Sin of Lying will further appear.

(2.) By considering it in its own Nature. And here we will briefly make these three Enquiries:

1. What is a Lie, and how many kinds of it?
2. Seeing the Wiseman prays against Lies in general; whether all sorts of Lies be unlawful?
3. What aggravations there be that make them more sinful?

1. What is a Lie, and how many kinds of it?
[1.] What is a Lie? What is the nature and being of a Lie? Conceive the nature of it briefly in this short expression: *A lie is a voluntary, and wilful telling of an untruth, with a purpose to deceive*. So that three things are required to the nature of a Lie.

1. There must be an Untruth and Falseness in the thing.
2. This Untruth must be known to be so, he must be conscious to himself, that it is false.
3. He must have an intent and purpose to utter this falsehood with a desire to deceive another by it, and to bring him into error.

So then from hence three sorts of Speeches are freed from this Sin.

1. Dark Speeches, that conceal some Truth: For a man is not always to express all he knows, except he be lawfully demanded. Thus *Samuel* concealed his anointing of *David*.

2. Figurative Speeches, and Parabolical; as to say, a Drunkard is a Swine. These have truth in them by way of representation and similitude.

3. Hyperbolic, excessive Speeches, are no Lies: as *Job. xxi. 25*. *The world cannot contain the Books that shall be written*; it implies no falsehood, but exceeding greatness of quantity.

[2.] *Quotuplex mendacium*? How many kind of Lies are there? Saint *Augustine* makes eight sorts: but all may be reduc'd to three:

1. Is *Jocosum*, the sporting Lie.
 2. Is *Officiosum*, the helpful Lie.
 3. Is *Perniciosum*, the Pernicious and hurting Lie.
1. There is a Lie intended to make sport with, and for delight; when men will tell untruths to make men merry, and to occasion delight in those that hear them. *Hosea* complains of this Sin, *Chap. vii. 3*. *They make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their lies*; frame Fictions, and lead them into ridiculous credulity; so to disport others, and themselves.
2. There is a Lie intended to help others, to do a man a good turn, and to help him at a pinch. Thus the Egyptian Midwives; thus *Rahab*; so the old Prophet told a Lie, to persuade the Man of God to go back to dinner with him.
3. And worst of all is the pernicious, mischievous, hurtful Lie, when we seek the hurt of another by our Lie. Thus *Joseph's* Mistress told a Lie to imprison *Joseph*: Thus they charged Christ, that he forbade paying of Tribute, that they might slay him. That's the first Enquiry.

2. Whether all these sorts of Lies be sinful? *Plato* said, That "In affairs of State, Magistrates might lie to advantage the Common-wealth. Among Christians, the *Priscillianists* in Spain, in St. *Augustine's* Time, taught, *It was lawful to lie for the helping of a good cause, and for the propagating of the Gospel, and for the advantage of Religion*. A wicked and pestilent Sect.

[1.] No Lie is lawful:

1. A Lie is contrary to God himself. He is the God of Truth. Hence he is said,

Serm. II. said, not only to forbid a Lie, but to hate a Lie. A Lie, 'tis an abomination. Now we abominate that which is contrary to our Nature; *Prov. vi. 16. A lying tongue is one of the seven things that are abominable to God. Prov. xii. 22. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord;* not only offensive, or odious, but abominable. His soul loathes them. A Lie draws its Pedigree from the Devil. *John viii. 44. He is a Liar, and the Father of it.*

2. A Lie is opposite to that Truth in which we were created. The virtue and grace of Truth is part of the Image of God, in which we were created, *Ephes. iv. 22.* And, on the contrary, lying is a part of the Devil's Image; He is a liar from the beginning. Other sins make us like Beasts, this of lying makes us like Devils.

3. 'Tis opposite to the very nature and institution of Speech. Our Tongue is our glory, and bestowed upon us by God, as an excellent instrument to express what the mind conceives, and to discover it to others.

4. 'Tis opposite to that Communion and Society, that we ought to maintain; it dissolves that mutual trust, that we should have with one another. *Dividing of Languages* turns all into Confusion, a *Babel*. So that *nullum mendacium licitum*. Yea, so unlawful, that,

[2.] Not the most Excusable Lie is allowable. There is no pretence whatsoever can make it warrantable; no, not the officious, or helpful Lie.

If not in these three Exigencies, then not at all.

1. *Exigent*: Not to save mine own, or another mans life must I lie. *Nec pro-dam, nec mentiar*, said *Firmus*. If I cannot escape but by Lying, then God calls me to Dying.

2. *Exigent*: Not to save a Man's Soul. A Lie in this case is not warrantable. *Ad sempiternam salutem nullus adducendus est, opitulante mendacio*: Aug.

3. *Exigent*: Not for God's Glory: We must not tell a Lie, to the advantage of glorifying God. *Job xiii. 7, 8. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?* We must not be false-witnesses of God, to say, *He raised Christ*, if he did not. We must not make *God's Glory abound by our lie*, *Rom. iii. 7.* As a man must not commit Murder, or Adultery for any good end, so nor lie. *Nullo pacto, nullo fine, nulla dispensatione potest licite mendacium dici*. That's the second Enquiry. The last is,

3. What Aggravations make a Lie the more sinful?

1. A lie is more notoriously sinful in regard of the Matter of it. This may aggravate it, if it be in weighty matters, and of great consequence. As to lie in matters of Religion, to teach Lies in matters of Faith, to love and believe Lies. Errors of Charity may be excusable, but Errors in Faith are damnable. So in weighty affairs amongst men, against the Life of a man; that heightens the Lie.

2. A Lie is aggravated, if it be done out of Delight, and a Love to Lies. *Psal. iv. 3. O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Psal. lviii. 3. The wicked go astray, as soon as they are born, speaking lies.* A customary Habit of Lies, that's hateful.

3. It aggravates this sin, if it comes out of Deliberation; when we come to a forging, and weaving, and framing, and contriving of Lies, to forecast, and plot them, when a lying spirit sits upon our lips, when we conceive, and travel with Lies. Danger, Fear, Passion, may alleviate; but deliberation aggravates.

4. The Place, and Condition of the Person, that aggravates:

1. For a Christian to lie, this is horrible. *Ye are members one of another*, saith the Apostle; and therefore ought not. What a shame was it for *Abraham*, that *Pharaoh* an Heathen, should take him with Untruth? *Gen. xii.*

2. For men of Authority and worth. Oh! it ill becomes them to be given to Lying. They should speak the truth freely, constantly. The Wise man tells us, three things are abominable; *a poor man, proud; an old man, dotting; a rich man, a liar.* These are unnatural, not having ordinary temptations. A rich man, what needs he lie? *ψεύδεις, δολοῦσιν*; 'Tis a base, brute quality to be given to lies, and so not befitting a man of greatness.

We have seen the Evil he prays against: Now follows,

Secondly, The Prayer he makes against it. *Remove far from me.* He sues for a gracious freedom from these evils:

For the purpose and intendment of this Prayer (as Expositors conceive) it hath a double aspect, it looks two ways.

I. It looks backwards to the vanities and sins of his former life. We must understand this Prayer to be the Petition, not of an innocent, but of a penitent man; of one that hath been already over-taken with these sins: and then 'tis a suit for Remission; "*Remove far from me* those sins that I have committed, charge them not upon me, acquit me from all my former vanities; and so he begs the grace of Justification.

II. It looks forwards, for the time to come; "I have been a sinner, and if thou keep me not, I shall again fall into sin; Oh! prevent me by thy grace, let no vanity of sin have dominion over me. So 'tis a suit for Sanctification.

I. Those sins I have committed, *Remove them far from me*; that's the grace of Subvention.

2. Preserve me for hereafter, that I sin not against thee, *Remove them far from me*; that's the grace of Prevention.

I. This Prayer respects *peccata præterita*, *Remove them* by remission; acquit and free me from them. And then the strength, and force of this Prayer, as it respects former sins already committed, will appear by these particular directions, or supposals.

(1.) *Remove my sins far from me.* The first supposal is; "That Sin, after 'tis committed, lies near, and close to us, continues, and abides upon us, haunts, and pursues, and dogs us; nay, sits close, and oppresses the Soul of a Sinner, like an heavy burden. 'Tis a Maxim in Divinity, *Peccatum transit actu, manet reatu*. Indeed, the act, and pleasure of sinning, 'tis transitory, and so most men judge of it; when 'tis committed, 'tis gone and over. True; but though the act be transient, yet the guilt and demerit, the stain and corruption, the accusing and condemning power of it, that abides, and continues, and rests still upon us; that's lasting and permanent. There is a kind of eternity in every sin in this sense: Which Divines give as a just reason, why Damnation should be eternal.

Carnal Reason enquires, and questions God's Justice; *Why doth God punish a sudden, short, momentary sin with everlasting pains?* They are answered, *It is just with God so to do*:

1. Because 'tis *contra Deum infinitum*; against an Infinite Majesty.

2. Because the guilt and stain of Sin, of its own nature, and unpardoned, endures eternally upon the soul. Alas! we think our sins are past, and over, when we have committed them. As the Harlot, Prov. xxx. 20. *she eats, and wipes her mouth, and thinks all is well again.* No, God describes the continuing abode of Sin in that speech to Cain, Gen. iv. 7. *Sin lies at the door.* It will not be shaken off or dismissed. We think to dismiss our sins, as Amnon did Tamar; when he had satisfied his lust, *Then arise, be gone, put her out of doors*, 2 Sam. xiii. 15. 17. No, 'tis not so discharged, it rests then, it *lies at the door*. Thus Job apprehends the nature of his sins, Job xiv. 17. *My transgressions are sealed up in a Bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity*; a just account and tale of them is kept. Thus David acknowledges the continuance of his sins, Psal. li. 3. *My sin is ever before me*, as a Ghost, or Fiend, continually haunting him. So Jeremy, Chap. xvii. 1. he describes the lasting continuance of Sin: *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of Iron, and with the point of a Diamond*; ἡ μὲν γραφή αἰὶν ἀλλὰ γλύψα, not only written, but engraven, that no hand can deface it. Slight not the commission of any sin, it perishes not with the acting. The least vanity hath a perpetuity, nay eternity of guilt. That's the first.

(2.) *Remove far from me.* A second Supposal is, "That God only can remove, and separate our sins from us. 'Tis his peculiar Prerogative to free and discharge us from the sins we have committed. *Isai. xliii. 25. I, even I am he, that blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* This God puts amongst his glorious Titles, *Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful and gracious, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.* The

Serm. II. Prophet *Micah* challenges all the gods of the Heathen, in this power of pardoning, and removing sin: *Chap. vii. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardons iniquity?*

1. Remission and pardon of sin is proper to him, that is the maker, and establisher of the Law. Inferiour Magistrates judge according unto Law, the Supream only can pardon, and forgive. *Jam. iv. 12. There is one Lawgiver, that is able to save, and to destroy.*

2. He alone can pardon, because he alone properly is the party wronged. Sin, as sin, is a trespass only against God. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, saith David, Psal. li. 4.*

3. Pardon of sin, 'tis an act of Supremacy, nay, Omnipotency, and so peculiar to God. *'Tis God that justifies, Rom. viii. 33. 'Tis as great a work to justify a sinner, as to create a World:* Aug. The burthen of sin we cannot shake off our selves, nor can any creature ease us of it; we must let that alone for ever. God himself must discharge our sins, or we can never be freed from them.

(3.) *Remove far from.* A third Truth implied is, "When God pardons sins, He makes a full separation, and removal of them: *He removes them far from us.* And the large distance that God sets betwixt us and our sins, when he removes them from us, will appear in these two removals, and separations, he makes of them.

1. *Removet à persona;* He makes a full remove of them from our persons.

2. *Removet à conscientia;* He makes a full remove of them from our Consciences, disburthens them of them.

1. *Removet à persona.* He fully frees, and discharges our persons, that our sins cannot lay hold upon us. The Scripture expresses the compleatness of God's pardoning us. *Psal. ciii. 12. As far as the East is from the West; so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* A large distance. We may as soon bring those two points of heaven together, as bring upon us our sins, when God hath removed them. Thus *Micah, Chap. vii. 19. He will subdue our iniquities, and will cast our sins into the depth of the Sea.* Be they never so many, never so great, the Sea can swallow them up; and if once sunk into the depth, they are past finding again. As God spake of the *Egyptians, The Egyptians, whom you see to day, you shall see no more:* As they all were drowned in the depth of the Sea: So, in *Baptism*, all our sins are drown'd. This pardoning of sin is called a *forgetting*; *Jer. xxxi. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, I will remember their sin no more.* 'Tis called a *blotting out*, *I am he that blots out thine iniquities, Isa. xliii. 15.* 'Tis defac'd and cancelled; 'Tis called a *burying of sin.* Our sins are buried with him in *Baptism.* This was represented by the Scape-goat, *Levit. xvi. They confess'd all their sins upon the head of the Scape-goat, and sent him into the Wilderness, the land of forgetfulness.* This *Jeremy* promises, *Chap. i. 20. In that time the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them.*

In particular, this full removal of our sins from our persons, stands in these four several degrees of removal.

1. 'Tis an Absolute removal and pardon; not depending upon after conditions. Indeed he requires conditions before pardon; as Repentance, and Faith: but then he absolutely acquits, and discharges us. Otherwise it were not a Remission, but a Suspension of our sins. No; God, when he pardons sin, accounts it, as if it had never been, and us, as good as innocent.

2. 'Tis an Universal pardon, and that removes sin far from us. He forgives not some sins, retains others; cancels not part of the debts, keeps the rest upon account; bids us not write fifty, or fourscore, instead of an hundred; makes not an abatement only, compounds our debts for a small sum, but abolishes all.

3. 'Tis a perfect pardon, and that removes sin far from us. He forgives not only the sin, but the punishment; not only the eternal punishment, but the temporary, reserves nothing upon the score.

4. 'Tis a final and irrecoverable pardon, and that removes sin far from us. Once pardoned, and always pardoned: once acquitted, and never again reckoned with. As he gives, so he forgives freely; upbraids no man with sins once pardoned. 'Tis a true determination of the Schools, *Pecata remissa nunquam redeunt.* The

gifts

gifts and callings of God are without repentance. He doth not repent that ever he pardoned us. 'Tis said indeed, *He repented that he made man*; but never that he redeemed, or pardoned, or justified, him. No, but he saith, as *Isaac of Jacob*, *I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed*. 'Twere against Justice, to punish that sin, for which he hath accepted a full satisfaction in Christ's death. Hear *St. Augustine* upon those words of the *Psalm ciii. 12*. *As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our sins from us. Peccata sunt in occasu*. When God pardons, our sins disappear, and set in the West; *Gratia in Oriente*, and Mercy and Grace, that's in the East, risen upon us. But not as 'tis in the Heavens; there *pars Cæli, quæ surgit, rursus in occasum vergit; nec sic gratia, quæ nobis oritur; peccata in æternum occidunt, gratia in æternum manet*. The Sun of righteousness shall never set upon thee.

Serm. II.

2. *Removet à Conscientia*. That's a second Distance of this removal; he takes the burthen of our sins off our Consciences, appeases and pacifies them. Sin, of it self, will lie heavy upon the Conscience. *David* felt as much, when he said, *Psal. xxxviii. 4*. *Mine iniquities are as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me to bear*. And Christ calls sinners, *Matth. xi. 28*. *heavy-laden*. The burthen of sin, when God charges it upon the Conscience, is unsupportable. Now, when God pardons sin, he removes this burthen, eases, and refreshes the Conscience. Every sin contracts a bond of guiltiness; now when God cancels the main Bond, and Hand-writing, he cancels also the Counterpane, that is registred, and kept upon Record in our Consciences, takes it off the File. And this he doth two ways.

1. *Ingenerando pœnitentiam*; by inspiring into the soul the Grace of Repentance. That empties the Conscience of all clogging sins. 'Tis the vomit of the soul. While sin lies unrepented, it makes us heart-sick; when God moves us to Repentance, then the Conscience is lightened.

2. *Obsignando pacem*; by settling peace and tranquillity in us, *Rom. v. 1*. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*. He takes from us the spirit of fear, endues us with the spirit of love, and of a sound mind. So that a Christian may now remember his sins without horror. Indeed for detestation, he never gives it over; but for horror and perplexity, he is freed from that. Now, saith *Saint Augustine*, *I can see my sins without horror*. God chains up Satan, sets us out of his reach, directs words of comfort to us, seals up our pardon. Here is another construction of this Petition:

II. This Prayer respects *peccata futura*. Remove them far from me, not only by Remission, but by a gracious Prevention. The former answers to *Forgive us our trespasses*; the latter to *Lead us not into temptation*. And then the strength, and full extent of this Prayer, will appear in these three degrees of distance and separation.

1. *Remove far from me*; that is, "Free me from the dominion of them; suffer no sinful vanity to have dominion over me. When any lust hath got the full sway in a man's heart, that it bids him go, and he goes; come, and he comes; do this, and he doeth it: this a Saint prays against, *O! keep me from presumptuous sins; Let not sin reign in my mortal body, let it not Lord it, and exercise authority over me*.

2. *Remove far from me*; that is, "Keep me from the surreption of these evils, and from the assaults and surprizals they may make upon me. *St. Paul* was free from the dominion of sin, but not from the vexation of it: *I find another law in my members: the evil I would not, that do I. Libera me à necessitatibus, Domine*: A good Christian prays not only against the Sovereignty, but against the Infirmities of sin: Let not only the dominion of sin not govern me, but let not the solicitations of sin prevail against me.

3. *Remove far from me*; that is, "Free me à reliquiis peccati. True Piety prays against the remainders of sinful corruption, those propensities, and inclinations to evil; desires not only to subdue them, but to destroy them. Proneness to evil, backwardness to good, the Saints groan under them; with *Saul*, they are not content to subdue these *Gibeonites*, but to destroy them.

4. *Remove far from me*; that is, "Keep me from all occasions of sin; set me not in slippery places, keep me out of the walk of my sin. He that would be free from any sin, shuns all occasions. *Prov. iv. 15*. *Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it*. He, that

Serm. II. is careful to avoid occasions, starves his sin. *Sæpè frustra surgendo, discit non surgere.* They are rare men, that can live amidst occasions, and yet not fall. *Lot in Sodom, Joseph with his enticing Mistress. Nemo diu tutus, periculo proximus.* And *quædam licita vitanda propter vicinitatem illiciti*: Aug. And *qui amat periculum, peribit in eo.*

5. Remove far from me: that is, "Restrain all temptations; chain up Satan, and the deceivable lusts. *Lead me not into temptation,* suffer not Satan to stand at my right hand.

6. There is one distance more, and that's implied in that word of the Text, *Tantisper dum vivo: Until I die.* How long prays he against *vanity and lies*? 'tis whilest he lives. That sets the date of his Prayer. Danger of sin is not fully avoided whilest we live: We are not free from inward corruption, or outward temptation. Neither are we to forbear sin for a time; but, as long as life lasts, never to return to it again.

Put all together then, and we shall find here three removals of sin.

1. Our Justification, that removes from us the condemning power of sin.
2. Our Sanctification, that removes from us the domineering power of sin.
3. Our death, that will free us from the very being of it.



The Third S E R M O N

On Prov. xxx. 8.

Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me.

WE have seen that part of this Holy man's Prayer, that respects his soul and spiritual Estate; *Remove far from me vanity and lies.* And having provided for that, in the second place he takes care for his body and temporal condition, and the welfare of it, prays for a competency and necessary provision for this present life. First he prays for a freedom from Sin, then for a freedom from worldly cares and distractions. *Sancta Methodus.*

Now this Prayer concerning his worldly Estate is framed and commended in a double Expression.

First, Here is *Deprecatio.*

Secondly, Here is *Petitio.*

First, A Deprecation, a Prayer to be freed from two Extremities.

First, Is a state of distress, and want, and poverty.

Secondly, Is a state of surcharge and superfluity of Riches.

He prays against over-little, and over-much; not to be pinched with poverty, nor to surfeit with too much prosperity. That's the Deprecation. Then comes in,

Secondly, A Petition, that's for a competency, a convenient portion of temporal blessings; *Feed me with food convenient for me.*

First, Here is his Deprecation, his Prayer against *poverty and riches.* And in it two things considerable;

First, Quod deprecatur: that he doth make a Prayer against both these estates, beggary and riches: that makes it observable,

Secondly, Fundamentum Deprecationis, the grounds of this Prayer, that make it warrantable.

First, Quod deprecatur, that is observable, This Holy man prays against these

two estates of life, want and riches. There is something, it seems, in both of them which a Christian would shun; neither of them so fully desirable, that this Holy man durst rush upon them at all adventures. So then, the bent of this Prayer detects, and discover to us a double error;

I. An Error on the right hand, that's an error of superstition.

II. An Error on the left hand, that's the worldlings false opinion.

The first is an Erroneous esteem that some have of poverty.

The second, an erroneous esteem that the men of this world have of plenty and riches.

I. Doth he pray against poverty? Then poverty and beggary is no state of perfection. The Church of Rome hypocritically and superstitiously commend the Vow and Estate of voluntary poverty, as an high pitch of piety, as that which commends their Monks and begging Fryars (than which, since the Caterpillars and Locusts of Egypt, the world never knew a more noysom swarm of Vermine) to God's high acceptation. For those evil beasts and slow-bellies, under a pretence of poverty, to renounce personal riches and possessions, and so to live upon the labours and charity of others, 'tis in their esteem an high piece of perfection. Nay, verily, beggary, it is not

1. In it self to be wished, or desired.

2. Much less to be voluntarily and wilfully incurred.

3. Least of all to be the matter of a Vow and solemn resolution.

I. Beggary in it self is not to be wished. This holy man prays against it. Of it self, it hath no place among the blessings of God:

(1.) For its inlet and original; it grows out of a cursed soil, 'twas the fruit of our first Sin. Adam created in plenty, himself outran his means, cast himself and his posterity into the necessity of poverty. As no pain, so no want, but by Sin.

(2.) In it self God still reckons it as *quid pœnale*. 'Tis amongst the plagues and punishments of sin. We find it comes with a menace and threatening in the Scriptures.

[1.] 'Tis threatned to wickedness in general, *Psal. cix. 10. Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg, let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.* That's the doom of a wicked man.

[2.] 'Tis threatned to some special sins.

1. To unthankfulness for riches and plenty, *Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things.*

2. To Unmercifulness and Cruelty to the poor, *Prov. xxii. 16. He that oppresseth the poor to encrease riches, shall surely come to poverty.* He that pities not poverty in others, shall feel it in himself.

3. To Idleness, *Prov. x. 4. He shall become poor that deals with a slack hand.* *Prov. vi. 11. Want shall come upon the sluggard like an armed man.*

4. To Drunkenness, and Gluttony, and Excess, *Prov. xxiii. 21. The Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to poverty.*

5. To Company-keeping, *Prov. xxviii. He that follows after vain persons, shall have poverty enough.*

6. To Adultery, *Job xxxi. 13. It will root out all a man's encrease,* *Prov. vi. 26. Bring him to a morsel of bread,* *Prov. xxix. 3. Spend his substance.*

7. To contempt of admonitions and instructions, *Prov. xiii. 18. Poverty shall be to him that refuses instruction.* 'Tis penal in it self, so not to be desired.

2. Much less is it voluntarily and wilfully to be chosen and incurred. Poverty, 'tis as War, *Tunc bonum, quando necessarium.* When God sends it, and calls us to it; not when we hasten and procure it. A Christian must be voluntarily poor by a willingness of submission and acceptation; not by a willingness of procurement and self-seeking of it. Thus David was willing to renounce his Kingdom; *Here I am, if the Lord say, I have no delight in thee, let him do to me as seems good to him;* *2 Sam. xv. 26. Suffer Poverty, as we suffer Affliction, not to run into it: But, if it befalls*

Serm. III. befals us, chearfully to undergo it; as we suffer persecution, when God sends it, not to provoke it our selves; as a Christian suffers death willingly, not hastening it, but when it comes, willingly to embrace it.

3. It must least of all be the matter of a Vow, to bind our selves to God to live in Beggary. Whatsoever is the matter of a lawful Vow, must be either *officium pietatis*, in it self an act of holiness; Beggary is not; Poverty nor riches do not commend us to God, the Kingdom of heaven stands not in riches nor poverty: Or, it must be *adminiculum pietatis*, as an help and furtherance to Piety. But the distractions of Beggary, they hinder; and the temptations of Beggary they quench and choak Piety, they do not advance it. Briefly, these Vows of Beggary, they are,

1. *Superstitiosa*, without warrant.
2. *Periculosa*, beset with temptations.
3. *Injuriosa*, reproachful to God, *who gives us all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17.
4. *Præsumptuosa*, and blasphemous, pretending merit and supererogation.

That's the first Error, *Poverty is no state of perfection.*

We have seen the first part of this Deprecation; *Agur* prays against poverty. And herein, I suppose, there will be no great need to persuade you to joyn with him. We are ready every one of us to say Amen to this Prayer; *LORD, keep me from poverty:* But,

II. Doth he not pray against Riches too? Yes; that's another prayer that *Agur* makes and prefers to God, with as much earnestness and devotion, as that against Poverty. And this prayer crosses the grand error of worldly-mindedness, that judges riches and abundance an happy condition. 'Tis the sum of every man's wish; and every one can say, *Lord keep me from want*; but who is afraid of Riches? Who prays against abundance? A natural man counts this Prayer a meer paradox. To be shie of the world, to suspect some danger in plenty, it cannot sink into a worldling's heart.

Well, this Text tells us, riches have no excellency, but they may be prayed against. So far forth as they are good, so they fall under the compass of our prayers; as their goodness fades, so must our prayers for them abate; and our prayers against them then are good and warrantable.

Take we notice then of the shortness and insufficiency of the goodness that is in riches, in these three degrees;

1. *Riches* are not *summum bonum*, not the chief, main good.
2. They are not *absolutè bona*, not absolute good in their nature and condition.
3. They are not always and to every man *bonum utile*, not instrumentally good.

1. *Riches* are not *summum bonum*, not the chief, main good. Indeed a worldly man judges them to be the very sum and substance, the marrow and quintessence of happiness. He knows no other heaven than full barns and bags. The wedge of gold is his God. The having of it makes him happy, the loss of it makes him miserable. Indeed, if it were so, it were not possible we should pray against it. Naturally, and necessarily the heart desires blessedness; it cannot reject it, or pray against it. No, *riches* are not *summum bonum*, for three reasons, or defects, that make them fall short of the chief good.

1. *Summum bonum perficit animam*. That which is the chiefest good of man, must have its seat in the chiefest part of man; it must perfect, and enoble, and make happy the soul of man. As a Crown, the ensign of royal Sovereignty, 'tis set upon the head, the noblest member: So Happiness, which is the crown of man, it must be the beauty and perfection of the soul and spirit, the only seat of man's excellency. Blessedness is principally, properly in the soul. Now riches, they have no ability to perfect that; they add no excellency to the spiritual part. *Man may be in honour, and yet without understanding, is like the Beasts that perish*, Psal. xlix. 20.

2. *Summum bonum satiat appetitum*. It gives full content and satisfaction to the desire, replenishes the soul, gives it perfect contentment. He that enjoys the chief

chief good, faith, *I have enough, my desires are filled up*; he solaces his soul, as David did, *Psal. xvi. 6. I am well-pleased, my portion is full, I have a goodly heritage.* He that hath the chief good, in which happiness consists, craves no more; all the corners of his heart are filled, his soul is replenished as with marrow and fatness. Now riches fail in this excellency, they do not quiet the desires of him that hath them; but still he is craving. The rich man's heart is like the Horse-leech, still crying, *Give, give.* True happiness quenches our thirst; he that tastes of it, *shall never thirst again.* But riches are like brinish water, *non satiat, sed irritat appetitum.* He enlarges his desire as Hell. Hab. ii. 5. and is as death, and cannot be satisfied; he is as one that transgresses by Wine.

3. *Summum bonum immobilitat statum.* Felicity always breeds security and settledness in that state. It puts him that enjoys it, in a fixed, constant, immutable condition. Once an happy man, and always happy. He is not happy that may be miserable, may lose his happiness. *A blessed man is not afraid of any evil tidings, his heart is fixed.* The Philosopher compares an happy man to a Square, Cube, or Die, cast it which way you will, it lies even and square. Chance or Fortune hath no power over an happy man. He is inseparably united to his chief good. Now riches fail in this property of happiness. A rich man's estate, is a mutable, changeable condition. James I. 10, 11. *The rich man as the flower of the grass, shall pass away; for the Sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes.* Though no foot tread on it, no hand pluck it, of it self it fades. *Riches make themselves wings, they flee away as an Eagle,* Prov. xxiii. 5.

2. Riches, they are not *absolutè bona*, absolutely, and every way good. If they were, then not to be prayed against. But riches are not so;

1. That which is in it self absolutely good, that certainly makes the owner, him that possesses it, good too. It gives an excellency and addition of good to him, that is endued with it. He is better with it, and worse without it. Thus Virtue, and Piety, and Grace, it makes a man the better man. *The righteous is better than his neighbour, more excellent,* Prov. xii. 26. *He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and Faith;* 'tis spoken of Barnabas, *Acts xi. 24.* These add goodness to the possessors of them. But riches have no such quality. One may be a rich man, but not a better man for having them. In 1 Sam. 25. there is Nabal, a rich, but yet a wicked man. Luke xii. 20. he may be a rich man, and yet a foolish man. Luk. vi. 24. he may be rich, and yet a cursed man; *Wo unto you that are rich.* Luke xvi. 23. he may be a rich man, and yet a damned man; *The rich man was in Hell-torments.*

2. That which is absolutely good, is so good, that it cannot be abused; 'tis always good in the use, and employment of it. Thus Virtue and Grace is absolutely good, a man cannot abuse it. The actions and employments of Virtue are always good, the practice and exercise of them is always commendable. *Virtute nemo male utitur*, faith the Philosopher. But riches have no such worth or excellency in them; they may be abused, and sinfully employed: as a weapon may be employed to commit murder, as well as to defend our lives, or to fight for our King and Country. Pride, and Luxury, and Oppression can abuse riches, as well as Justice and Charity can lawfully manage them. As they say of Mercury, he is good in a good Conjunction, and bad in a bad. Eccles. v. 13. *I have seen riches kept for the owners thereof to their own hurt.* *Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt,* Paris.

3. These things that are absolutely good, are absolute pledges of God's love, and by God bestowed upon his best beloved. They are the *blessings of his right hand,* and belong to those that shall stand at his right hand. But riches and honour are in his left hand, faith Solomon. *He fills the bellies of wicked men with this treasure.* They are not *bona throni*, but *bona scabelli*. No man can know love or hatred by them; or say, *God gives me riches, therefore he loves me*: but of Grace we may say, *God gives me Faith and Charity, and therefore he loves me.*

3. Riches are not always instrumentally good. They are *bona non unde sis bonus, sed unde facias bonum*, Aug. Take riches at the best, and they have but the goodness of an Instrument to do some good by them; an inferiour, subordinate, serviceable

Serm. III. able goodness, that's the lowest degree of goodness that can be. Yet oft-times riches fail in this kind also; not only by way of abuse, but they are oft-times in themselves unserviceable, and useless for much good: Indeed the Worldling thinks wealth a *paragone*, an universal instrument; an engine to work wonders with. *Eccles. x. 19. Money answers all things.* No such matter.

1. It's of no avail for Heaven. *Zeph. i. 8. Neither their silver, nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath.* Thus Solomon compares it, *Eccles. vii. 12. Wisdom is a defence, and Money is a defence; but the excellency of Knowledge is, that Wisdom gives life to them that have it;* the life of Grace and Glory: so cannot riches, *Job xxxvi. 19. Will he esteem thy riches? Can they ransom thee?*

2. 'Tis not available for many Temporal comforts. It enables not a man to perform many actions. *Prov. xxii. 1. A good name is better than riches;* that makes a man able to do more good. Riches cannot preserve life, nor procure health, nor ease pain, nor mitigate sorrow. Indeed *Godliness is profitable for all things.*

That's the first, *Quod deprecatur.* Now follows,

2. *Secondly, Fundamentum Deprecationis.* Let's enquire into the grounds of this Prayer, that make it warrantable. What is it, that makes him to deprecate poverty and riches? That we may the better conceive of this,

I. Let us remove those false grounds that are, or may be supposed for this Prayer;

1. The first false ground of this Prayer is of them that conceive it to arise *ex spiritu veteris Testamenti.* It was a Prayer agreeable to the state of the Old Testament. That, they say, was a state of weakness and imperfection. They had no such enablements of Grace, to undergo voluntary poverty, or to manage great riches in an holy manner. Nay, verily, that is not the reason. For though under the Old Testament Grace was not so diffused, yet we find as eminent Saints as under the New. *Abraham's Faith, Job's Patience,* the Gospel propounds these as most transcendent examples of Piety. The Spirit in the Old Testament enabled *Abraham* to be rich holily; and *Job* to suffer extream poverty, patiently, comfortably.

2. A second false ground of this Prayer is, that *inopia* is *maledicta*; that poverty by God is a prohibited, nay, a cursed condition. Indeed of its own nature 'tis penal, but yet the condition of it is alterable by Grace. Labour and pains had a cursed original; but now commanded, and sweetned, and blessed by Grace.

I; but the Scripture forbids Beggary.

(1.) 'Tis a Promise, nor a Prohibition; *He will bless them,* and keep them from poverty.

(2.) If a prohibition:

[1.] 'Tis *in causis*; not to do that which may bring beggary, as being idle and wastful.

[2.] 'Tis *in praxi*, not to accustom our selves, not to make it a trade of life, to live by begging.

[3.] 'Tis *in remedio*, enjoying the rich to relieve and support them, to provide against the necessity and shame of begging. But otherwise, *Poverty*;

1. The Gospel turns it from a malediction to an affliction, from a curse to a cross only.

2. 'Tis *in Sanctis honorata*, 'tis advanc'd in many Saints: *Job, Lazarus, Paul,* have undergone it holily.

3. 'Tis *Sanctificata in Christo*, 'tis sanctified in Christ's undergoing of it. He took not upon him our riches, but our poverty. Poverty hath this dignity belonging to it; it hath one conformity to Christ, that rich men have not.

3. A third false ground is, *quia copia interdicta.* An error that *Pelagius* thought, that *Under the Gospel it was unlawful to be rich, and it was necessary to salvation to abandon wealth, to embrace poverty.* Christ indeed bids us *part with all.*

1. In affection, not in possession; to unglew our hearts from them; not to set our hearts upon them: *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them,* *Psal. lxiii. 10.* They may be in our hands, they must not be in our hearts. 'Tis *mundi concupiscentia*, that doth *nocere, non substantia*, *Bern.* *Paul* bids *Timothy*, not to charge rich

rich men to abandon riches, but not to be proud of them, to trust in them, to hoard and withhold them from a charitable communication, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *In divitiis cupiditatem reprehendit, non facultatem*, Aug. Serm III.

2. In willingness and preparation of mind; so to enjoy them, as when God calls for them, to be willing to part with them; to forsake wealth, as we must Father, Mother, all other comforts, when God calls for them. *Te suffered joyfully the spoiling of your goods*, Heb. x. 34.

3. Even actually to forsake them in case of salvation; in time of persecution, when the Church of God stands in need of them; as those in the Acts sold all. Otherwise, as *Augustine* speaks, The poor man *Lazarus* was in rich *Abraham's* bosom, both meet in Heaven.

II. Let us enquire into the true grounds, that moved this Holy man to frame this Prayer to deprecate these two extremities. Neither too much, nor too little, but a mean betwixt both, a competency.

1. The first may be *Commensuratio virium*: That's the first Rule, and Reason of his Prayer; a due estimate and proportion of his strength and ability. He takes a just scantling of his abilities and infirmities, considers what estate he is best fitted for, what burthen he can bear, what will be too heavy for him. He found himself subject to the temptations of too much want, or plenty; that he could not endure the pinchings of poverty, nor the surcharge of plenty; and so desires of God to put him into that condition for which he was fitted.

That's a Rule of Wisdom, in all our employments, and choice of course of life, to consider, *Quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusant*. Too much lading may sink the Ship, too little may expose it to every blast. Poverty, that dejects me, makes me murmur: riches, they puff me up, swell my heart with pride; Lord, free me from both of them. That's the Rule we should observe, according as God hath given to every man the measure of strength, Rom. xii. 3. This proportion God observes in distributing his Talents, Mat. xxv. 15. to one five, to another two, to another one, to every man according to his several ability. We should check our craving desires, as Christ did the ambition of Zebedee's Sons, Mat. xx. 22. *Are you able to drink of the Cup?* are we able to wield the estate we seek and sue for? Thou that wilt vow poverty and single life, art thou able to undergo that condition? thou that pursuest greatness, hast thou strength to manage it, and not to be overcome with it? Thus St. Paul resolves the Query of the Corinthians concerning Marriage and Virginity, 1 Cor. vii. 7. *Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that*. As Saul questioned with David, 1 Sam. xvii. 33. *How canst thou grapple with Goliath? he is an experienced Soldier, thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth*. Oh, I have experience, I have slain a Bear and a Lyon. Weak brains must not clamber into high places. Thou castest thy self into temptation, to venture upon that estate, to which God hath not fitted thee. *Abisalom* he would be a King, &c.

2. This holy man makes this Prayer against too little, or too much; 'tis *approximatio Mediocritatis*, out of the true estimate of a state of Mediocrity. Which truly considered, is the evenest, the best estate for a comfortable life. A garment too long, or too short, is unhandfom, and troublesome: so is an unproportionable means of life. A shoe too wide, or too strait, troubles the foot. The private condition with competency breeds the truest sweetness. As that's the best Situation of an house, that's under the wind, and out of the dirt. Not so low, as to be trode upon, not so high, as to be maligned. As in *Jotham's* Parable, Judg. ix. the sweetness of the Vine, the fatness of the Olive must be left in a place of eminency. Mediocrity, not too much greatness, that frees us from envy, on the one hand; Mediocrity, not too much poverty, that frees us from contempt, on the other hand.

3. He prays against these two Extreams, Why? *Liberior opportunitas*. The estate of Mediocrity gives us a more opportunity for serving of God, and minding our spiritual estate. And that should be the scantling and levelling of all our aims. Mark those two Rules *Paul* gives in consulting about Marriage.

1. The first was, 1 Cor. vii. 7. *As every man hath his gift*.

2. The second was, Verse 35. *That you may attend upon the Lord without distraction*.

Serm. III.

That condition, of life, that is freest from distractions; that which gives me the best opportunities of serving God, that condition pray for.

Here is a Rule of judging of our outward condition; that which enlarges the opportunities of my service to God; that which lyes in the streightest and directest way to Heaven; as this is the best way that brings me to my Journey's end, not that which is the fairest. Now poverty and abundance naturally pester the heart with cares and distractions. The poor man, he cries out, *What shall I eat?* and *What shall I drink?* and *What shall I put on?* The rich man hath his thoughts, *Mat. vi.* and the rich man hath his distractions, *Luke xii. 17.* His riches make him cry out, *What shall I do?* *The abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.* Labour in getting, care in keeping, fear of losing; these trouble his thoughts; the five yoke of Oxen, and the new Purchase makes such men refuse the invitations of God's grace, whereas competency frees from these anxieties.

4. He begs a mediocrity and no more; a fourth Reason is *Temporalium parvi pensio*; it argues a sober, religious, due estimate he hath of these outward and temporal things. He stands in need of them, and so would be loth wholly to want them, but yet desires no more than needs must, cares not to abound in them. He that hath a rectified Judgment in the things of this world, and knows how to set a due value upon them, will shape his desires at this scantling. In spiritual blessings there is an holy covetousness, *Covet the best gifts*, *2 Cor. xii. 31.* *Study to excel*, *1 Cor. xiv. 12.* *Abound in grace*, *2 Cor. viii. 7.* *Be rich in good works*, *1 Tim. vi. 18.* Thus *St. Paul*, *Phil. iii. 14.* *I press forward toward the mark, &c.* But for temporal things, he speaks at another rate; *Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content*, he saith not *τερεσθω*, *Delicates*, but *τερεσθω*, Food; not *ορνηματα*, ornaments, but *ενδυσματα*, rayments, coverings; any filling for the belly; any hilling for the back would serve him his turn. And as *S. Paul* instructed his Scholar *Timothy*, so did *Jeremy*, *Baruch*, *Chap. xlv. 5.* *Seekest thou great things for thy self? Seek them not.* These outward things, they have but the nature of a *viaticum*, a bait in the way; but as much as will serve a mans turn. We should do as men do with lumber, they will buy no more than is necessary; for they cannot carry it away. In grace our desires should know no stint; but in outward things competency should be our rule of seeking and praying. 'Twas so with *Jacob*; *Bread to eat, and rayment to put on*: he asked no more, *Gen. xxviii. 20.*

5. He begs a mediocrity, freedom from both these distracting conditions; we must conceive his Prayer to be *Votum limitatum*; circumscribed and bounded with due reservations. He prays against poverty; but with submission: if God sees fit it should be otherwise, he can stoop unto it. Our blessed Saviour taught us how to desire these outward things in that Prayer of his to his Father, *Luke xxii. 42.* *Father, if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done.* Father, remove from me this bitter cup of poverty, or this sweet overflowing cup of plenty; if it be thy will, let them both pass over me; but, if thou seekest it good to allot me either, I submit, *Fiat voluntas Domini.*

'Tis lawful to wish and pray for a competency; but a Christian must be fitted for any extremity. *Agur's* pitch is lawful; but we must not stop there. Grace in the strength can enable us for all estates. *Paul's* scantling must be aimed at, *Phil. iv. 12.* *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* Our first wishes and desires must be for conveniencies; but our resolutions must be for any condition. If God call me to abundance, I will learn to receive it thankfully, to enjoy it soberly, to communicate it charitably. If he call me to poverty, here I am; *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* It was Faith in *Abraham* that made him beg *Isaac*; by Faith he received him: I, but God will have his Faith wound up to an higher pitch; his Faith must enable him to kill his Son, when God calls for him. *Agur's* Faith craves mediocrity, *Paul's* Faith undergoes want, poverty, nakedness, persecution, every extremity.

We have seen his Deprecation; now follows,

Secondly, His Petition, his Prayer for a competency, a convenient portion of temporal

poral blessings; *Feed me with food convenient for me.* For understanding the purpose of this Petition, we must make a double enquiry. Serm. III.

First, Quid cibus? what he means by *Food*?

Secondly, Quid cibus dimensi? What he means by *food convenient for him*?

First, Quid cibus? What means this Holy man, when he prays for *food*? The necessities of life are many, manifold comforts we stand in need of. Answer, by food we are to understand whatsoever is requisite and useful for the sustaining of this present life, all necessary supplies to support and maintain us in our temporal being. St. Paul calls them, in a comprehensive word, *τὰ βιωτικά*, the things of this life, 1 Cor. vi. 4. St. James, *things which are needful for the body*, Chap. ii. 16. Thus St. Augustine expounds that Petition of our Lord's Prayer, *Give us this day our daily Bread*; *Quando rogamus panem, quicquid nobis propter carnem nostram in terris necessarium est postulamus.* Jacob expresses it (as before) *Bread to eat, Clothes to put on.* So St. Paul, *Having food and rayment.* Our Saviour expresses it in these three particulars, *What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewith shall we be clothed?* Mat. vi. 31. All those things wherein the life of man consists, those staies and props, that shore up these houses of Clay, and continue our welfare, are here understood. When we call for food; food, and raiment, and dwelling, are all comprehended under this Term.

And he expresses his desire of the conveniencies of life under this Term, for these reasons;

I. *Food*, 'tis the most natural and immediate supply for life. He asks not a competency of Silver and Gold, a stock of money; because in these the life of man consists not. All a man's *care and travel is for his belly*, as Solomon saith. If God give thee food and raiment, what if he furnish thee not with those dead commodities? 'Tis the morsel of bread, not the wedge of Gold that Nature seeks for. Natural riches stand not in such Treasures. Adam the richest man upon earth, his abundance was not in money; but in the provisions of nature, that served for sustenance. These are properly called *God's riches*: David surveying the compleatness of the world in all useful Creatures, saith, *The whole earth is full of thy riches*, Psal. civ. 24. *Thou fillest their bellies with thy hid Treasures*, Psal. xvii. 14.

II. *Food*, 'tis the most necessary supply. There are many comfortable and beneficial helps to life, our habitations and dwellings, and other defences to shelter and succour us; but nothing is so immediately the fuel of life, as our food and sustenance. 'Tis called the *staff and stay of bread*, which supports our life. Houses, and garments; and other supplies were useless to Adam in Paradise; but even then food was necessary; in that his life consisted. Nature may come to some extremities in other things, and yet subsist, as in poor Lazarus; but withdraw sustenance, then our breath fails, and we return to our dust.

III. *Food*, 'tis the most daily and ordinary supply. Christ calls it *our daily bread*. The Lamp of Life must be continually fed with this Oil, or it goes out. In the Wilderness God renewed their food daily, Manna every morning; but he did not miraculously renew, but continue their garments to them: To teach us, that the daily supply of food, 'tis a point of necessity; but the daily, and frequent, and various supply of garments, and cloathing, 'tis excess and vanity.

Secondly, Quid cibus dimensi? What is meant by *Food convenient*? What's that we call *cibus dimensi*? 'Tis a general word of an uncertain extent. *Food convenient*, "True, saith every man, that's all we seek for, to be fitted for conveniency, to have things about us, to be set out of the compass of want, and to have things decent.

I. The proud man and ambitious, that glories in his abundance, that prides it in his plenty, he aims at nothing but decency and conveniency.

II. The voluptuous and luxurious man, that must be *cloathed in the finest linen*, and must *fare deliciously every day*, he pleads for nothing but conveniency.

III. The covetous and worldly man, that *enlarges his desire as Hell*, is still getting and heaping, 'tis his aim, nothing but conveniency. The rich man in the Gospel thought it was for his conveniency to pull down his Barns, and build bigger.

Serm. III. Conveniency is a stint and measure, that stands not *in puncto indivisibili*; 'tis not of one and the same size; not like the Gomer, that measured out the *Manna alike to all*, *Exod. xvi.* but hath its latitude and variety. Take the nature of it in these four Proportions, which will set out the true scantling for our desires.

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1. The first scantling and proportion of convenient food, and means of living, is a civil dimension. Vouchsafe me what supplies of temporal blessings are necessary and convenient for my civil condition. And that hath a double proportion in it.

1. The first is to be taken from our state and calling, in which God hath placed us. So we are to pray for a competency of temporal blessings, by which we may walk to the faithful and comfortable discharge of our Calling and Vocation. And here is a latitude. A publick and an honourable calling and employment requires a fuller supply of temporal blessings, than a private and inferior. The estate of a King, and his authority requires greater abundance than of any subject. And that may be but competency, nay, indecency and poverty in a King, which yet is far too much in a private man. 'Twas a fault in *Nabal*, and a culpable excess, that *he made a feast like the feast of a King*, *1 Sam. xxv. 36.* And so for other delights the Prophets seem to blame them, *Amos vi. 5. They invent to themselves Instruments of Musick, like David*; they will equal the pleasures of King and Court. Treasures are necessary for Princes. We find one, *Isai. iii. 7.* refusing place of Government, because he was poor. As 'tis in the nourishment of the natural Body, supply of nourishment is made to every member, according to the capacity, and use, and employment of it, *according to the measure of every part*, *Ephes. iv. 10.* So in the civil Body, more supply to the nobler and choicer parts, that are of more excellent function. Here is one stint to proportion thy desires, exceed not the bounds of thy Calling. "Not too much, Lord, nor too little; thou, that hast placed me in this Calling, support me in it, shew thy blessing upon it, and it suffices.

2. A second Proportion in our civil condition is a proportion of our charge, that God hath committed to us. Hath God made thee a Master of a Family, given thee the place of a Steward over others? blest thee with Wife and Children? the care of these must set an honest proportion to thy desires. "Lord, I beg not riches for them, not to make them as the great Ones of the earth; but thine they are, and thou gavest them me, enable thy servant to a moderate and competent ability of providing for them.

'Tis a Theme, that Worldly-mindedness needs not to be put in mind of. Infidelity believes this Doctrine. So that *Paul* tells us, *1 Tim. v. 8. He that provides not for his own, is worse than an Infidel.* And so a man may be careful to provide for his own, and yet be no better than an Infidel: 'Tis true; but yet in Conscience of God's command, they that have this charge, are charged with the care of them. *Fathers lay up for their Children*, *2 Cor. xii. 14. A good man leaves an inheritance to his Children*, *Prov. xiii. 22.* A man freed from these cares, hath less cause to be solicitous. As *Abraham*, when God promised him abundance, said, *LORD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I have no Child?* *Gen. xv. 2.* And 'tis a greater vanity, that *Solomon* complains of, *for a man, that hath neither Child nor Brother, and yet there is no end of his labour.* Otherwise *Jacob's* care must take place, *When shall I provide for mine own house also?* *Gen. xxx. 30.*

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3. A third Proportion, 'tis Natural; give me a competency, that which may suffice bare nature, and relief of my life; that which may support me, though meanly, hardly. Give me that, Lord, and 'tis sufficient. Natural necessities are soon supplied; that was *Jacob's Vow, Food and rayment; Job's necessary food: Chap. xiii. 12. Let it be the bread of labour, the bread of sorrow, the bread of affliction, and the water of affliction, or bread of tears, or ashes like bread*; Nature saith, *Sufficit, 'tis enough.* Nature laps only, like those three hundred Souldiers, *Judg. vii. 6.* but Carnality, like the rest of the People, grovels, and stoops down to satisfy the desires. See what examples Christ propounds to us for the cares of this life, he saith not, Consider the Lions (devouring Beasts) or the Eagles (birds of Prey) but two Sparrows, a little grain suffices them. If God so provide for us, we are not forgotten.

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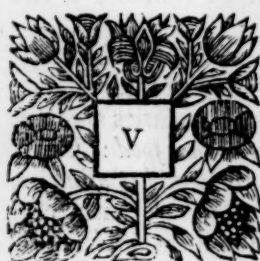
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THE

The Fourth S E R M O N

On PROV. xxx. 9.

Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or, lest I be poor——



Idimus Petitionem.

Now follows,

Thirdly, The last main particular of this Holy man's request; and that contains the Motives and Reasons, by which he strengthens and enforces this Prayer against Poverty, and against Riches, and why he sues to God for a Competency; *Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or, lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

And of these his Motives and Reasons, we will take a double consideration:

First, We will consider these Reasons in general, as they have a common reference to both these extremities, *too much*, and *too little*.

Secondly, We will consider them in particular and asunder, as they are proper and peculiar to either of these estates.

I. What is it that moves him to pray against Riches, *Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD?*

II. Then follows the Motives, why he prays against Poverty; *Lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*

First, Let us look upon this Motive in general, this earnest enforcement of his Prayer against the incumbrances and distractions of temporal things. And in it we may discover many evidences of goodness, many prints of Piety, many motions of an holy and heavenly spirit. Take them in these Expressions and Observations. Six there are;

I. The first print of Piety, in this closure of his Prayer, is *Sancta methodus*, the religious order, and heavenly art, he observes in his Devotion. What is the first thing he prays for? What's that, that hath the birth-right in his supplications? Freedom from sin, *Remove far from me vanity and lies*. What's the last thing he prays for? What's the closure and upshot of his Devotion? That's *freedom from temptations*, that may lead him into sin; that he may not sin against God, and deny him; nor *steal*, and so dishonour God by falsehood and forswearing. The care of his spiritual estate, the fear of falling from God by any sin or wickedness, that takes up his first, and his last thoughts, the choicest and chiefest of all his Devotions. The cares of this life, they have an inferiour and secondary consideration; the main part of his devotion, 'tis for his spiritual condition.

'Tis a Rule among Oratours, to place the strongest and most effectual parts of their Eloquence, in the first and last place of their Declamations; if any thing be of less moment, to put it into the midst. And 'tis the manner of men, skilful in Military Discipline, to place their less considerable Souldiers in the middle of their Army, not in the front and rear; there they place their chiefest strength. See this Art practised by this holy man. First he prays for his Soul: Lastly he prays for his Soul. The thoughts for his Temporal welfare, are placed between them both, as a matter of less consideration. *In medium quasi agmen*, they are cast, as it were, in the middle

middle rank, according to *Homer's* method, placing infirm things in the middle. *Serm. IV.*
Indeed the Soul deserves a double care ;

1. The Soul, 'tis the most noble and principal.
2. The necessities of the Soul are more various and manifold.
3. The miscarriages of the Soul are more dangerous and deadly.

And so the care of the Soul, challenges the most of our thoughts, the chiefest and frequentest of our desires and prayers.

'Tis a tryal and discovery of most mens Devotions. The prayers of many, they are carnal prayers, not favouring of the Spirit. The speech of *St. John* is true of most men, *He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaks of the earth*, John iii. 31. It may be he can be frequent and importunate for temporal blessings; but a little devotion, a few cold wishes will serve for the Soul. In this case we put off God, as *Abraham* would have done; God promised him *Isaac*, and in him the Messias: *Oh, faith he, that Ishmael might live before thee*. Gen. xvii. 18. When we hear of Promises made to our Souls, *Oh!* we would exchange them for worldly favours; rather that God would testify his love to us in temporal things. No, no; Then Religion and Piety have a due place and sway in our hearts, when they have the place and power of *Primum principium*, and *Ultimus finis*, when they begin and end our Supplications, are the main sum of all, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, of our cares and prayers. He begins his suit for spirituals, he ends it for spirituals, he wedges in the other Prayer for a competency of temporal things, as a *Viaticum*, or Bait only in the mid-way; as our Saviour doth the Petition for daily bread. Six Petitions for Spirituals, to one for temporals; and that placed *in medio*, as in the passage only; to teach us to use the world and the comforts of it, *ut hospitium, non ut domicilium*, only as an Inn or baiting place in our journey to Heaven. That's the first Print of Piety, *Sancta methodus*.

II. A second Print of Piety in this Motive, and closure of his Prayer, is *Sancta intentio*, an holy aim and intention in this Prayer concerning his temporal estate. He prays against incumbrances and distractions of outward thing, desires a competency. Why so? what's the reason of his desire? not for it self, and for the freedom from these extremities, and only to enjoy a present contentment; but in an holy reference to his spiritual estate and condition, for the furtherance of that. 'Tis possible, a meer natural man out of civil and moral Principles and considerations, may wish himself freed from too much, and too little, and desire only a mediocrity in outward things. I, but here he makes a full period, he aims no further. 'Tis out of natural apprehensions of more ease and expediency, and more quiet tranquillity, that he might live *succinctè*, in a more commodious manner. But this Holy man looks beyond that, and terminates all his Desires and Prayers for temporal blessings, in an holy reference to his spiritual condition, to the promoting of that, that so he may further his after-account, and be fitted to serve God more effectually.

Many a natural man, nay, many an Heathen have attained to this moderation in outward things, but yet out of inferiour ends. Their Motives are all within the compass and sphere of carnal reason; *It suits best with me; I may enjoy my self more fully and freely; I shall be Master of my self and my time; I shall not suffer the vexations, that riches or poverty occasion; I shall be out of the lash of envy, and not subject to scorn or contempt*. That's all that flesh and blood aims at. But Piety fetches its reason of this Prayer from higher Principles, and more spiritual thoughts and considerations; *O keep me from the extremities of too much, or too little, lest they endanger my soul and spiritual estate; Free me from the briars of Poverty, and the Thorns of Riches, lest they wound and pierce my Conscience, lest they entangle me, and bedge up my way and passage to heaven; that my account may be more easie and comfortable, that I may attend upon the Lord without distraction*. Thus *St. Paul* exhorts *Timothy* to endure hardness: *How? O, as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ, and not to entangle himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Souldier*. That's the second Print of Piety, *Sancta intentio*.

III. A third Print of Piety in this his Prayer, and the Motive of it; *Lest I be rich, or lest I be poor*, is *Sancta suspicio*, an holy shiness and circumspection, nay an holy jealousy and suspicion, that he carries in his mind of these temporal things, *I may get a mischief by them*. Take it in these three Particulars :

1. Tem-

Serm. IV.

1. Temporal things, our outward and Secular affairs, all wordly conditions are hazardous, they are capable of a *Ne fortè*. They are attended, and beset with dangers. There are *præcipitia*, downfalls on both sides of them; not any estate of life, but breeds them. Riches, that hath its danger; Poverty, that hath its train of temptations. Every Calling and Condition may occasion our ruin. Indeed, some Estates and Callings are in themselves unlawful, and wicked, and those that live in them are, as *Tertullian* speaks, *ex Officio peccatores*, Sinners by profession. These are not to be thought upon with suspicion, but to be avoided with detestation. But even our lawful employments, our stations and conditions, which are just and warrantable, have also their hazards. In some degree or other, every state in this world, is, as *David* speaks, a *slippery place*, *Psal. lxxiii. 18*. The World is called a *Sea of Glass*, *Rev. iv. 6*. The walking in the World, 'tis going upon Ice, slippery, brittle, dangerous. In which respect *Tertullian* calls a Christian, *salutis funambulus*, one who walks upon a rope, easily swayed awry, and cast into danger.

1. In themselves, they are capable of abuse and miscarriage. Many rubs and stumbling-blocks, many ditches and downfalls, that have drowned men in perdition. It made *St. John* give us this warning, *Love not the world, nor the things of the world*, *1 John ii. 15*.

2. 'Tis worse by our corruption, that's eagerly bent to abuse even the lawfulest things. *St. Peter* ascribes the corruption of the world to Lust; *Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*, *2 Pet. i. 4*. A corrupt heart will take mischief in any course of life; as a Drunken man stumbleth in the evenest way. In every strong and violent lust, there is *spiritualis quædam ebrietas*. Make him rich, and he is proud; poor, and he is false.

3. Every temporal condition and calling hath many hazards, and dangers in it, through the malice of Satan. He hides his snares and gins in them to catch our Souls. He makes our table, *Psal. lxxix. 22*. *to become a snare to us, and that which should have been for our welfare, to become a trap*. He is the God of this world, *2 Cor. iv. 4*. and uses the world as his bait, and lure to take us by. He places his ambushment in these outward things, and so sets upon us unawares. He takes advantage from every estate. Are we in wealth? he bids, be proud: Are we poor? He tempts us to curse God and die. Thus he made *Judas* his Office of bearing the bag, the occasion of his ruin. That's the first, *Secularia periculosa*.

2. A second Particular is, this Holy man considers this Truth, the dangers in every estate, and so in the choice of his temporal condition he is timorous and circumspect. He forecast these dangers, he rushes not upon these outward things at all adventures, but looks upon them with an holy jealousy, forecasts the mischiefs and inconveniencies that are incident. 'Tis the Devil's policy to shew us the desirable part of the World; but he hides and conceals the vexations and temptations. As to Christ he shewed the *glory of the world*, but not the sorrows and mischiefs. And it must be our wisdom to ponder the dangers, that attend us in all our courses. Not to consider the profit, or pleasure, or advantage of such a condition; but to look upon the snares also; to see *Jael's* Nail, as well as her Milk; *Delilah's* Scissers, as well as her embraces; the sting of the Bee, as well as the Honey: To see,

1. The lawfulness of it; *Is this a warrantable course of life?*

2. Not to rest only in the lawfulness of it, but forecast the evils and temptations that are incident. Thus *St. Paul*, *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient*, *1 Cor. vi. 12*. This course is lawful, but it will put me upon such and such temptations. Forecast and arm thy self against them.

3. A third Particular, the World, and every condition in it, being thus dangerous, see the Piety of this Holy man, he chuses that condition of life, that is freest from occasions of sinning against God. Riches, O, they are full of snares; Poverty, that hath its temptations; the state of mediocrity and competency, that's the safest: Therefore that he begs of God. Thus *Paul* assails the doubt about marriage or single life, which they should chuse; first let them look to their gift and ability, *1 Cor. vii. 7*. *Every man hath his proper gift of God; but then, Verse 35. I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you; but for that which is comely,*

and

and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction. He advises to that, which, *Serm IV.*

1. Is most profitable for Piety.
2. Casts fewest snares upon us.
3. Is most decent and becoming Christians.
4. Distracts us least in the service of God.

Thus Joseph dealt with his Brethren, he might have advanced them in the Court, bestowed great Places upon them; no, he would not, but kept them in a lower, but yet a safer, less dangerous employment: *Thy servants trade hath been about Cattle, even from our youth until now, both we, and also our Fathers; now therefore we pray thee, let thy servants feed our Sheep in the Land of Goshen, Gen. xlvii. 34. xlvii. 4.* 'Tis a good evidence of Piety, to forsake a more plentiful portion of temporal things, because spiritually dangerous; and to embrace a mean and inferiour condition, because safer from sin. That's the third Print of Piety, *Sancta suspicio.*

IV. A fourth Print of Piety in this Prayer, *Sancta praelatio*, an holy preferring and advancing of his spiritual estate before his temporal. Here are two estates, the one temporal and secular, the other spiritual. And so here are two desires; he seeks for supplies in both, takes care of both. (We must do so, we are *fili seculi*, and *fili Dei*.) I, but which must give way to the other? which of these prefers he to be Principal? which must give Law, and prescribe to the other? See his Piety; his spiritual estate must prescribe, and order, and moderate his temporal; not his temporal his spiritual. He prays not thus, *Give me so much Religion, and Grace, as may further me in my thriving and prospering in the World;* but, *Give me such a portion of this World, as may best suit with the growth and improvement of Religion; such an allotment of outward estate, as may help me forward in my spiritual; so much temporal means, as may be commodious and advantageous for Heaven.* Here is a true Print and Character of a Pious man, that minds his salvation in good earnest; he will make the World to stoop to Religion, and to take Law from it, and not Religion to the World. His Conscience shall guide his Purse and his Profit, not his Profit his Conscience.

Whatsoever thou settest up in thine heart as thy chief aim, that will measure out, and set bounds to all other inferiour things. 'Tis *mensura reliquorum*; and *ultimus finis, dat mensuram mediis*. Now an Hypocrite, in whom the world bears sway, what proportion keeps he? The World and his base ends, that sets bounds to his Religion; *So much Religion as may stand with my Profit, or Pleasure, or Credit*: these must bear sway, more Religion he will not admit of. He doth *uti Deo, ut fruatur mundo*. Not too little Religion, or none at all; Men will cry shame of me, I shall be counted an Atheist, it may hinder my Profit, that: nor yet too much Religion in any Case; if that get any sway, it may prejudice my Profit, or I may be scorned or malign'd. Thus there are that make Religion an underling to the World, it must be stinted and kept at an allowance by it; they make it a Lacquey and Journeyman to the World. *Æstimant fidem pretio vilissimo, bono temporalis*. The World is the Standard of their Religion. No, Piety and Religion is of a commanding nature, it must bear sway and over-rule, place and displace all other things at pleasure.

Many can entertain Religion as a Servant to bring in their Profit; or, may be, more civilly as a Guest or Friend, take such as he finds: But if it finds fault, or begins to control, away with it. As the Sodomites entertained Lot, and used him civilly, as a Sojourner; but when he began to take upon him, and to find fault, then they endure him not. Nay, Religion and Piety will not enter into any man's heart, but upon better Terms; *The World must be my Underling, no more of it, than I like and allow*. It must have recourse and inspection into all thy tradings and pleasures, set limits to them all. God will not admit any to take up his Religion, but upon these Terms. When the People said, *Josh. xxiv. 18. We will serve the LORD, and take him for our God*, Joshua tells them in the next verse, *Ye cannot serve the LORD, for he is an holy and a jealous God*, he will not brook any unlawful course. They say, "He that takes an Hebrew-servant, takes not a servant, but a Master to himself; they would be no drudges, they; 'Tis true of Piety. God

Serm. IV. takes it in foul scorn, *Isai. xliii. 24. Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins.* That's the fourth Print of Piety, *Sancta praelatio.*

V. A fifth Print of Piety in this Motive, *Lest I be full and deny; lest I be poor and steal, and forswear,* is *sancta praevisio*, an holy forecast and foresight, that he hath of the dangerous downfalls and descents of Sin, the multiplying nature of it, how one Sin begets another.

1. He is afraid of Riches. Why so? lest I surfeit of them. What then? lest that breeds pride and prophaneness in me, and at last, brings, me to *Atheism.*

2. He is afraid of Poverty. Why? lest that bring me to pilfering and stealing, and that carry me further, to Swearing and Perjury. True Piety knows there is no stint in Sin: but fears and foresees a downfal into extremity; it dares not venture upon the least beginnings of any ill, for fear of running headlong into all kind of impiety.

'Tis a vain delusion to say, *I will venture upon this sin, but no further; I will be covetous, but yet just.* No, 'twill carry thee, and hurry thee through all kinds of evil. *Judas* meant only to get preferment by Christ, then he began to pilfer, and play the Thief, and deal falsely; at last, this covetousness hurried him to that heinous sin of betraying Christ. *David* meant no more but some dalliance with *Bathsheba*; but it stayed not there, but brought him to other sins, to make *Uriah* drunk, and then to murder him. *Peter* thought only to strain a little courtesie with Christ, by dissembling his knowledge of him; but it brought him to swearing, and banning, and curling. 'Tis as easie to stay thy self in the swiftest running down of a steep hill, when thou art half-way, as to stay thy self in the beginnings of sin. Thou wilt be a good-fellow, and no more; take heed thou doest not fall into the utmost debauchery. Remember *Solomon*, how he fell by degrees. Remember *Alipius* in *St. Augustine*, who going only for company to those bloody Spectacles of the Gladiatory Combats, wherein men killed one another, to make sport for the People, came at last to applaud them: *Spectavit, clamavit, exarsit*, saith the Father: Remember *Monica*, who began to sip a little Wine, at last came to quaff off full Cups. *David* sets out these head-long downfalls of sin: *Let them fall from one wickedness to another, and not come into thy righteousness*, *Psal. lxxix. 28.*

1. Few or none are so desperate at first, as to leap into Hell at the first dash; but they will begin with less evils, play about the brink of Hell. Tell a young Gallant, he will spend all, turn a High-way-man, and come to the Gallows, he will take it ill at your hands; *What do you make of me? What, am I a Dog?* So said *Hazael*, *2 Kings viii. 13.* Yet he proved so and worse.

2. There is no stop in Sin; but we pass from one degree to another. Sin is of a multiplying nature. There is a concatenation of vices. A little lust sets open the door for a greater. One Devil brings seven other Devils worse than himself.

3. 'Tis the art of the Devil, one of his *perfidias*, his flights and wiles, to engage us in less, smaller, more excusable sins at first; then to inveigle us further, till at last he brings us to extremity of finning. As some Arch-Traytor, that first buzzes the People in the head with some petty discontents, seek them redressed, then to take up arms, then to open Rebellion.

4. 'Tis the course of God's Judgments, when we will be dallying with sin, to give us over to the power of it in extremity. He withdraws his grace, suffers Satan to stand at our right hand, and to take us at pleasure. This, this holy man foresaw, and considering, trembles at the long-train of sin: if he yield willingly to any, he is in danger of all. Oh! then avoid the first beginnings of sin; think no sin small, which is a step and degree to greater. Give not way to the Water, no not a little, lest it break down the banks. Keep a narrow watch over our selves, that we be not overtaken. Withstand the first motions and enticements to sin; watch over thine heart, lest thou fall: if thou hast slipt, be sure to rise up by speedy Repentance. Beg of God to awaken Conscience, to warn us of the least evil, and to prevent us by his Grace. That's the fifth Print of Piety, *Sancta praevisio.*

VI. A sixth Print of Piety in this Motive, *Lest I be full, and deny thee, or, lest I steal, and take thy Name in vain,* is *summa sollicitudo*. What's the main thing he is solicitous

solicitous of? the grand mischief, he most fears in both these estates? The main and utmost upshot into which his fear resolves it self, is impiety against God; lest I sin presumptuously, or blasphemously against him. Pride in it self is a great sin, to be puffed up with Riches; and stealing is an heinous crime, in wronging our Brethren: but that which the soul of this holy man most of all detests, is that God's Name and Honour should be blasphemed. Serm IV.

Agur in this Motive, discovers three Evidences of Piety.

1. The mischief which he fears in both Estates is *Peccatum*, Sin.
2. A worse thing he fears, that's *multiplex peccatum*, the guilt of many sins, the engendring and multiplying of one sin by another.
3. But the main evil of all, that his spirit trembles at, is, lest he should offer contempt and despatch immediatly to God himself.

Indeed in every sin there is an implicit, secret, virtual contempt offered to God. As Samuel told Saul, *Rebellion*, in any kind, is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity, and Idolatry, 1 Sam. xv. 23. This scared Joseph from Adultery, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. In all kinds of sin we wrong our selves and others; but here is the malignity of every sin, that it violates God. In any sin, that which makes it properly sinful, is, that it is against God. As in wronging our Neighbours. Lev. vi. 2. *If a Soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his Neighbour in that which was delivered to him to keep, or in fellowship, or in taking away by violence, or hath deceived his Neighbour*; all sins of this nature entrench upon God. But yet the Conscience of a Pious man especially startles at those sins that immediately offer violence and contempt to God's Glory and Majesty. In every sin we offend God as a Law-giver; but in those sins, which resolve upon his Person and Glory, we sin against him as the Party wronged. By the former we displease him; by the latter we reproach him. As a Thief or Felon offends against the King in his Laws; but a Traytour offends against his Laws and his Person. Christ confirms this, when the Lawyer asked him, *Which was the greatest Commandment?* Mat. xxii. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*; Ver. 38. *This is the first and great Commandment*. So, which is the great sin that is forbidden? Contempt and hatred, and blasphemy against God.

1. It sins against the most excellent Object: and according to the quality of it, so is the Offence.

2. The Obligations to God are more binding, than to any man; we owe more to him. As a man is bound to love his Parents more than his Brothers; they are the Fountain of Life to him.

3. To sin against the Glory of God, is the greatest sin; because 'tis most repugnant to the last and utmost end of us, and all our desires, the Glory of God. *Magnum malum existimamus furtum, quia pecuniam summum bonum putamus*: Hier.

It should rectifie our judgments, to judge as God doth. A rich man oppressing, Oh! we cry out against him; or a poor man stealing! every man will be an Officer to apprehend the Thief: But a prophane Blasphemer, an Atheist, an Idolater, a Prophaner of God's Glory, Worship, Sabbaths, they are slight sins. It were an unworthy carriage to the King, to urge his Laws in our own behalf to punish a petty Larceny; but, if a Traytor should attempt upon the King's Person or Crown, to sit still, and slight it: Yet thus we deal with God and his Laws; those that concern our selves, we regard; those that are to safe-guard his glory, and honour, we never regard them. That's the last Print of Piety, *Summa sollicitudo*.

Hitherto we have considered the Motives of this Prayer in general, in six Prints of Piety: Now,

Secondly, Let us take them asunder, see them apart.

I. What's the danger of Riches, that makes him pray against them? *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD?*

II. What's the danger of Poverty, that makes him pray against it? *Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.*

Serm. IV. I. Come we to the first, *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?* So that here are two sins, that he forecasts, and fears in being Rich:

1. Fulness.

2. Prophaneness. Riches, they occasion fulness; and fulness, that will breed prophaneness, and contempt of God.

1. The first noysom weed that grows out of a rich Soil, 'tis the sin of fulness. And is that such a sin? Plenty and abundance, and fulness of all things, cannot in it self be properly a Sin. God promises to his People a *fulness of all good things*, Deut. vi. 11. I answer: There is a double Fulness:

(1.) A fulness of possession, when we feel not the least want of any thing; our Barns full, our Garners full, our Store-houses full. This fulness the Wise-man counts dangerous, but not sinful and vitious.

(2.) A fulness of fruition. And by fruition I understand it not in a strict sense, as it imports a delightful enjoying, and orderly use of outward enjoyments, which things belong to the blessings and promises of the Gospel; in which respect the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 17. that *God gives unto us much more abundantly, all things richly to enjoy*: but I take it here for that full glut, that some have in the enjoying these outward things; when we deny our selves nothing, satisfy every desire, pursue our pleasures to the utmost. St. Augustine describes such men, *In cibum, & potum non ex officio descendunt, sed per cupiditatem ruunt*. They must feed full of all the delights and pleasures. This is a great evil, and you shall see the evil of it in two Particulars:

[1.] In it self 'tis an evil affection.

[2.] As it ushers in other evils with it, 'tis an evil disposition.

[1.] In it self 'tis an evil affection. This evil comes of Riches, and for this the Wise-man prays against them. They occasion a fulness of joy and fruition, when we take too much of our wealth, over-use, and over-enjoy it, spending our substance in feeding our lust, and pleasing our appetites with it. If Riches had no other mischief, this makes Agur afraid of them. Suppose they entice thee not to oppression and tyranny; as the rich mans wealth, Prov. xviii. 11. is his Castle, not only to defend himself, but to annoy others; as St. James describes them, *Ye have despised the poor; do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?* Chap. ii. 6. So Chap. v. 1. he thunders against the rich, *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you*. Why so? Not only for their covetous hoarding their gold and their silver; *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten, your gold and silver is cankered*: not for their cruel oppressing, *The hire of the Labourer is kept back by you*, Vers. 4. but Verse. 5. *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton, ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter*. Oh! we think such Rich men as offer violence to none, but only enjoy themselves and their pleasures, worthy men; nay, we commend them highly: Psal. xlix. 18. *Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thy self*. They speak well and honourably of such men as these. But in God's account, this glut of wealth, and a full satiety of all pleasure, is sinful: See this Psal. xii. 10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in Robbery; if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them*: not oppress, not increase them wrongfully: nay, if God's blessing increase them, yet delight not too much in them, take heed of a surcharge. *Non rapit villam alienam*, saith St. Augustine, *sed minus amat suam*. It may be thou takest not away another man's wealth; but thou lovest thine own too well. 'Tis that Sin which Solomon fell first into, and that wrought his ruine, and which he afterwards confesses and repents of, Eccles. ii. 1. *I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure*, then he would build him goodly Houses, Gardens, and Orchards, stored himself with Attendants, got himself Men-singers, and Women-singers, and the delights of the Sons of Men: Vers. 8. *Whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept it not from them*, Vers. 10. he withheld not his heart from any joy (and surely a King, and rich, and in times of peace, may be allowed this, if any) and yet you know the fearful consequence, he bewails and laments it. The rich Glutton in Hell, what was his sin? we hear of no oppressing, but he fared deliciously every day, he sucked

sucked out the sweetness of his wealth; 'tis his voluptuousness that damned him: *Serm. IV.*
Son, remember, that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and therefore thou art tormented, Luke xvi. 19, 25, &c. This was that which hastened the rich man's end, *Luke xii. 19.* he set his heart to enjoy his wealth to the full, *I will say to my Soul, Eat, and drink, and be merry, thou hast store enough; that brought this fatal hour upon him.* And what the portion of such as he will be, guess by what was said of *Babylon, Rev. xviii. 7.* *How much she hath glorified her self, and lived delicately, so much torment and sorrow give her.*

See the heynousness of the Sin of fulness, and over-joying of this World.

1. It argues great security, and this is the usual forerunner of destruction. When there is no wind, but the Sea is becalmed, then usually a storm rises. When the air is still, then usually comes an Earthquake. *When they shall say, saith Paul, 1 Thes. v. 3. Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travel upon a woman with Child, and they shall not escape.* When the old World was bent upon their pleasures, then the deluge came, *Luke xvii. 26. &c. As it was in the days of Noe, — they did eat, they drank, they married Wives, they were given in marriage, and the flood came and destroyed them all. As it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, till it rained fire and brimstone from heaven.* Those places and times, were guilty of heinous and horrid sins; but he instances in their secure enjoying the world. It argues great security. *St. Jude calls it, Verse 12. a feeding without fear.* Thus to enjoy the world, in contempt of God's judgments, 'tis a sin God will revenge. When the Lord threatened judgments, *Isai. xxii. 13. then behold joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine; that security God would not pardon.*

2. This glut and fulness of enjoying the world, it begets in us a slavery to these pleasures, it makes want and hardship to be intolerable to us. This made *Paul* abstain from many things, *I will not be brought under the power of any, 1 Cor. vi. 12.* A voluptuous man cannot live without his pleasures. Thus *Moses* aggravates the misery, that shall fall upon the *Israelites, Deut. xxviii. 56. The tender and delicate woman amongst you, which would not for delicateness and tenderness adventure to set the sole of her feet upon the ground, she shall suffer these and these things.* He that is not overjoy'd in plenty, shall not be over-sorrowful in adversity. *They that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not, in sad times, they shall mourn, as though they mourned not.* They that are able to say with *Paul, We buy, as though we possessed not, and use the world, as not over-using it,* shall be able to say with him, 'in times of adversity, *2 Cor. vi. 10. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

3. This fulness in enjoying the World, argues our over-high prizing of the World, that it hath the possession of our whole heart, and that we make it our chief good. Fruition is an action, that belongs only to our *summum bonum*; we place it upon nothing, but upon that wherein we place our happiness. Dost thou rejoice thy self to the full in the world? The world then is thy God, and the pleasures of it. *St. Paul* tells such, *2 Tim. iii. 4. They are lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God.* *St. James* tell such, 'tis spiritual Adultery, *Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? James iv. 4.* *St. Paul* tells us, *Phil. iii. 18. that such are flat Atheists, enemies to the Cross of Christ.* It wrung tears from his eyes, to see Christians live so voluptuously, *I tell you weeping, they are enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*

4. This fulness of fruition of present things, it argues small longing or expectation, or hope of the pleasures of another world. The earnest expectation of them would moderate and abate our present fruition. Thus *David* describing the present enjoyments of worldly men, *Psal. 17. 14. Thou fillest their belly with thy hid treasure, full of children, and full of all comforts; but as for me, Vers. 15. I will behold thy face in righteousness, when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.* The expectation of that takes him off from present fruition. *Dulcedo promissorum faciat*

Serm. IV. *te contemptorem dulcedinum sæculi*, Aug. As he that looks for a second course, will not fill himself with the grosser food, that's served in at first.

5. This fulness of enjoying these present things, 'tis a shrewd sign that we have our portion here. *David* calls these enjoying men, *Psal. xvii. 14. The men of this world, that have their portion in this life.* They are like the Prodigal, *Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me*, *Luke xv. 12.* 'Tis too long for them to stay for heaven; and they that will have their heaven here, shall be sure to miss of it hereafter. "Tis not (saith St. *Hierom*) the way God observes, to remove us à *deliciis ad delicias*. He will never bestow upon us two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. They are sad speeches Scripture uses to such. St. *James* tells them, *They have lived in pleasures upon earth*, *James v. 5.* and therefore must not look for pleasure in heaven too. What saith Father *Abraham* to the rich man in Hell? *Son, remember, that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things*, thy pleasure; not as *arrham sponfi*, *ut munera amici*, *ut beneficia Dei*, but *ut mercedem*, as thy final reward, and thy portion for ever. Nay, what saith Christ? *Luke vi. 24. Wo unto you that are rich for you have received your consolation.* There will be a time when we shall stand in need of consolation; and if it be already spent and gone, what shall we do then, when the evil day comes upon us? He saith not, *Wo be unto you, for you have received your contentation*, but, *your consolation*. God allows us contentation in the use of his temporal blessings; but beware of making them thy consolation in the full fruition of them. 'Tis enough for us Christians (saith St. *Augustine*) so to be provided for, while we are here below, *ut inferioribus non offendamur, solis autem spiritualibus delectemur*. 'Tis enough, if we have so much, as to free us from vexation only; spiritual and heavenly things, they must be the matter of our consolation. *You have already received it*, that's the receipt of the Prodigal, not of the dutiful Son. A dutiful Son, if he have present maintenance, is willing to stay for his full inheritance. As *Gerson* tells of a Devout man, that when a deluding Apparition was made to him, as of Christ in His Glory, he shuts his eyes and cries out, *Nolo hic Christum videre, I desire not to see Christ here, but hereafter*: So beg of God, however he deals with thee here, to reserve thy consolation for another world. As Saint *Chrysostom* notes it, they that desire to grow rich by Usury, they are desirous their debtours should still keep their Money, sorry they are when they bring it in, they would have use upon use: So doth a good Christian desire his comforts, and portion, and reward should still rest in God's hand; *Give me not here, LORD, reserve it for hereafter*. If I may so receive, that I may be received: if I may so receive the good of this life, that I be not barred the other to come; *tanquam arrham*, as the earnest of a better inheritance, *Ecce me!* but, if my receiving here shall be my last receipt, if I shall receive them *tanquam mercedem*, as my portion for ever, I renounce them, put me out of this receipt, and reserve my part in store for the land of the living.

The Fifth S E R M O N

On Prov. xxx. 9.

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or, lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.

WE have seen this Sin of Fulness in it self, as it is a sinful affection; Now consider it,

Secondly, As it helps in, and occasions another and greater Sin, and so 'tis a sinful disposition. Now the Sin it occasions, and disposes to, and which this Holy man prays against, 'tis the Sin of Prophaneness and Contempt of God, *Lest I deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD?* And that's,

Secondly, The other noisom Weed that grows out of a rich Soil. This fulness and abundant furcharge, and over-enjoying of Plenty, is a fruitful disposition to many evils: As an over-rich and fat soil of it self sends forth many noisom Weeds; so doth the heart of man that's fatned with a glut of pleasures in outward things. 'Tis *subactum solum*, a soil fitted for many sins to grow out of. The sins of *Sodom* were fearful and crying sins; whence had they their first rise? even from this plentiful enjoying of their abundance. This was a rich Country as the Garden of *Eden*, Gen. xiii. 10. and see the fruits of their plenty, *verse 2*. The men of *Sodom* were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly: *Ezekiel* Chap. xvi. 49. ascribes all their abominations to this furcharge. The sins of *Sodom* were fulness of bread, then abundance of idleness, then neglect and contempt of the Poor and Needy; then Pride, they were haughty, then they brake out into filthy abominations before the Lord. Their fulness did *despumare in libidinem*, as *Tertullian* speaks. These and many more are the fruits of fulness. Better therefore to be fed upon the salt Marishes, and short Commons, then to be gluttoned with fat Pastures.

But yet the main mischief, and to which it most usually disposes our hearts, is that, which this Holy man doth forecast, 'tis denial of God. A great and an horrid sin, and the upshot of all Impity; for a man to come to this height of wickedness, as to set his face and open his mouth against Heaven, and to bid defiance to God, to offer to pluck God out of his Throne, and to lay his honour in the dust: Yet this great evil, fulness, and abundant fruition of riches, will occasion in us. And it disposes to a denial of God three ways:

First, *In sensu*, in our understanding and judgment.

Secondly, *In cultu*, in the matter of Religion and Worship of God.

Thirdly, *In officiis imperatis*, in those Duties that we owe to God, as fruits and testimonies of our acknowledgments of him.

First, The first denial of God is *in sensu*, in our thoughts and apprehensions we should have of his Majesty. When we deny him in our judgments, 'tis an express denial of God, when we come to flat, and open, and down-right Atheism, saying with the Fool, *Psal. xiv. 1. There is no God*. Now this over-joying and surfeiting with abundance, it disposes a man to this great Sin, to question, nay, to deny Gods Being, by three dangerous effects that it hath upon the heart of man.

I. This sin of Fulness, when a man's heart is full of the World, and the pleasures and profits of it, takes up the whole heart, it leaves no place for the thought or remembrance of God. Thus *Isaiah* describes the men of this world, enjoying it to the full, *Chap. 52. 1. The Harp, and the Viol, and the Tabret, and Pipe, and Wine, are in their Feasts;*

Serm. V. Feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. The noise of these pleasures drowned all thoughts of God. Thoughts of God, and love of the World, are like Fire and Water, they cannot consist in intense degrees, they destroy each other. When the World hath dominion over a man's heart, it takes up all the rooms and lodgings; if God should offer to come in, it would fare with him, as with Christ in *Bethlehem*, *There was no room for him in the Inn*, Luke ii. 7. When God would lodge in the Understanding, that upper Chamber, that's full of worldly contrivances; when he would enter into the Memory, lodge there, that's the World's Warehouse, that's pestered with worldly cares; when he would reside in thy heart and affections, they are the World's Storehouse; there lies the treasure of a worldly man. Fulness excludes any further entrance; the love of the World justles out all thoughts and remembrance of God; *God is not in all his thoughts*, Psal. x. 4.

II. This Fulness of the World disposes to Atheism, because worldly men set up a false Deity in the ordering and disposing of all worldly things. They see not the Hand of God in them; but ascribe all to a blind casual course of Fortune. Such an one owns not the Providence of God, but imputes all to secondary Causes. His Plenty, whence comes it? from the goodness of the Soil, or the seasonableness of the Weather, or the influence of the Heavens; nay, he will thank his Dung-hill sooner than his God. *They say not in their hearts, Let's now fear the Lord our God that gives rain, both the former and the latter, in his season, and reserves unto us the appointed weeks of the Harvest*, Jer. v. 24. His preferment and good success in the World, he knows no other cause of it, but friendship and favour of men: Preferment comes either from the East, or from the West, or from the South, but not from the Lord. Like *Darius* his Courtiers, they make no prayers unto any God, nor return any thanks, but only to the King. Like Pope *Adrian*, that gave this profane account of all his preferments, *Ultrajectum plantavit, Lovanium irrigavit, Cæsar dedit incrementum; Hic ergo Deus nihil fecit*. Nature and secondary Causes, is all the God a Worldling acknowledges.

III. This fulness endangers us for Atheism, because it occasions a man to judge all happiness to be in this life. A Worldlings thoughts, like a Fools, are all for the present. Let him enjoy the World to the full, here is his Happiness and his Heaven too. 'Tis Atheism not to consider of another World, to have no thoughts or considerations of eternal life. Tell a worldly man of laying up treasures in Heaven, and of the riches of that Heavenly inheritance, he smiles at it, he will not give a foot of Land here for an Acre in Heaven. Tell him of an Harvest in Heaven, his carnal heart will ask, What? is there any ploughing there? any sowing and reaping there? Thus the *Sadduces*, that were arrant Atheists, believed neither Spirit nor Resurrection, *Acts* xxiii. 8. They came to Christ scoffingly, *What, Master? Are there any Marriages in Heaven?* Mat. xxii. No, here they set up their rest. If they may enjoy this world, they will abate God the next. As the *Reubenites* and *Gadites*, they would stay on this side *Jordan*, abate their portion in the Land of *Canaan*, because they were already in a rich Country. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*, 1 Cor. xv. 32. there's an end of the world with them. They know no other condition of their souls, but to enjoy these present things. 'Twas the Speech of an *Atheist*, nay, of a Swine, *Soul, eat and drink, take thy pleasure, thou hast goods laid up for many years*. Thus Fulness breeds Atheism in sensu, corrupts our minds and judgments, and so tempts to this great prophaneness of denying of God.

Secondly, It disposeth to a denial of God *in cultu*. When a man, may be, will allow there is a God; but his Religion and Worship, and the holy Profession and practice of that, he abandons and forsakes: that's a second kind of Atheism and denial of him, when a man comes to that degree of prophaneness, as to neglect and give over the true worship of God. Thus the Gentiles were Atheists, *without God in the World*, Eph. ii. 12. Why? Did they not confess a God? Yes verily, they had a Conscience of a Divine Power: *but when they knew God, they glorified him not as God*, Rom. i. 21. they embraced not his Religion. Thus *Ely's* Sons were Atheists,

Atheists, *They were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord*, 1 Sam. ii. 12. that is, they prophanelly neglected the true worship of God. Thus 'tis said of *Israel*, *For a long season they were without the true God*, 2 Chron. xv. 3. Why? they still retained the knowledge of God: What then? *They were without a teaching Priest, and without Law*; they forsook the worship of God, and his Religion, so they denyed him. And this kind of denial of God, fulness of enjoying the World doth dispose us to in three degrees.

I. It begets a backwardness to embrace the Profession of Religion. The World and the enjoyments of it, staves men off from Religion. How hardly do rich men, yea how hardly can rich men enter into this Kingdom? In Christ's time, how few rich men became his Disciples? The common people, they followed him, but do any of the Rulers believe on him? *Joh. vii. 48.* To the poor the Gospel is preached, and they embraced it. The rich have no leisure nor list to attend to him and his Doctrine. *Brethren, ye see your calling, how that not many Mighty, not many Noble are called.* Neh. iii. 5. *But their Nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord.* Yoaks of Oxen and new Purchases take up their thoughts, that they can find no leisure to serve God, *Luk. xiv. 18, 19.*

II. If these worldly men vouchsafe to own it, yet this Fulness begets a carelessness in Religion. A man careful for the world is usually careless for Religion; he can spare no thought or diligence for matters of God, he can spare no water from his Mill of worldly pursuits. Tell a man given up to the world, of the cause of Religion, you will find him a meer *Gallio*, one that never cares for any of those things, *Act. xviii. 17.* So much Religion as the world will allow him, but no more. *His heart goes after his Covetousness*, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. As a man that's full, may be, he will taste upon the point of the knife some dainties, but he cannot feed.

III. This Fulness begets a readiness to renounce Religion when it comes to the trial. The ground that received the seed for a time, withered; *in time of persecution they fall away*, Mark iv. 17. What Satan falsely surmised of *Job*, 'tis true of every worldly man, *He will not serve God for nought*, Job i. 9. As long as God makes an hedge about him, and blesses his substance, he will own Religion: but touch or take away all that he hath, and he will *Curse God to his face*. When Religion calls one way, and the World calls another, farewell Religion. Thus *Judas*, when he saw nothing but opposition encroaching, the supposed Kingdom went not forward; Christ talked of the Cross and Persecution, that makes *Judas* turn Apostate and Traytor. So *Demas* saw the world went another way, forsook *Paul*. The young man in the Gospel, when Christ told him of parting with all, gave over Christ; if Heaven be so dear, and Religion cost so much, 'tis no penny-worth for him. A Worldling deals with Religion, as the men of *Keilah* would have done with *David*, they entertained him for a while, but when *Saul* pursued him, they were resolved to betray him, they would come into no danger or trouble for him. Thus this Fulness it will breed Atheism *in cultu*, dispose to Apostasie, and make a man abandon all, rather than forsake the World.

Thirdly, There is yet a third denial of God that this Fulness disposes to, and that's *in officiis imperatis*, when we perform not those duties which are testimonies of our acknowledging him. And this though it be not expresse and open Atheism, yet 'tis an implicit, virtual, interpretative Atheism and Denial. As there be many ways of denying our Allegiance to our King; not only by open disclaiming of his Sovereignty, but by many other undutiful practices, that the Law counts Treason: So in this case, when the world fills up our hearts, it breeds a virtual, tacite, secret denial of God, which God accounts as ill, as open Apostasie. A man may make a very specious profession of God, but by a close, secret conveyance, renounce and deny him. There may be *protestatio contraria facto*, as the Lawyers speak, and *Paul* expresses it, *Tit. i. 16.* *They profess they know God, but in works they deny him.*

Now this kind of denial of God, Riches and fulness tempts us to in several kinds.

I. The first kind of this denial of God is forgetfulness of him; when we suffer the awful remembrance of him to vanish out of our hearts. We may retain the notional remembrance of him in our heads, and yet lose the awful remembrance

Serm. V. brance of him in our hearts: and a glut and fulness of the World disposes us to it.
 1. God forewarns his People of it, *Deut. vi. 11, 12.* *When thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware, lest thou forget the Lord.*

2. God complains of this as the cause of his Peoples forgetting him, *According to their Pasture, so were they filled, they were filled, Hos. xiii. 6.* *Their hearts were exalted, therefore they have forgotten me.* Thus David shews that plenty breeds oblivion of God, and scarcity awakened them; *They forgot his works and his wonders that he had shewed to them; but when he slew them, then they besought him, and they remembered that God was their rock, &c. Psal. lxxviii. 34.* The love of the world hath a strange power to put out the thought and remembrance of God, as light of the Sun puts out the Candle: so will the World extinguish the light of knowledge that God hath enkindled in us. Thus David describes a wicked Worldling: *God is not in all his thoughts, Psal. x. 14.*

II. A second kind of denial of God which Fulness will occasion, is the denial of ungratefulness. Unthankfulness is a denial of God to be the Fountain and Original of our riches and abundance. It ascribes not our wealth to his Blessing, makes not him the Author of our Portion, *Deut. viii. 17, 18.* God forewarns his People of this perilous consequence upon their abundance: *Beware thou forget not the Lord—and thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth: remember, 'tis He that gives thee power to get riches.* And so, *Hos. iii. 8.* God charges this sin upon the Israelites; *She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oyl, and multiplied her silver and her gold.* See the diverse spirit in a worldling, and a pious man in this point. *Gen. xxxiii.* Esau he speaks of his wealth, and Jacob of his; *Esau, Verse 9.* acknowledges his abundance, *I have enough;* but Jacob, what saith he? *Verse 11.* *Because God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough:* both had enough, but Esau looks not up to God, as Jacob doth. 'Tis that, which *Habakkuk* condemns in the wicked, *Chap. i. 16.* *They sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.* Job calls this the kissing of their own hand, *Chap. xxxi. 27.* They Lord it like *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30.* *I have built it by the might of my power; like that Dragon in Nilus the King of Egypt, that said, Ezek. xxix. 3.* *My River is mine own, I have made it for my self.*

III. A third kind of denial of God, which Fulness tempts us to, is the denial of dependance; when our plenty and abundance makes us conceit our selves to be sufficient in our selves, and that we need not depend upon God. As *Hezekiah*, when he was strengthened in his Kingdom, revolted from the King of *Assyria*, would not acknowledge any dependance upon him, *2 Kings xviii. 7.* This is the temptation of a glut of the World, it makes us say in our hearts to God, *I have no need of thee;* we can maintain our selves, stand upon our bottom, subsist of our selves. This God observes in that proud King of *Assyria*, that boasted himself against God, *Isa. x. 15.* *As if the Ax should boast it self against him that heweth therewith; or the Saw magnifie it self against him that shakes it: or the Rod shake it self against him that lifts it up, or the Staff should lift up it self, as if it were no wood.* Fulness will puff a man, not only to think himself Independent of all other men, but even of God himself. Emptiness, that makes us look up to God, and depend and wait upon him; but Fulness never owns him, he can do well enough without God. Like the Prodigal, when he had got his Portion in his own hands, then farewell Father, he needs no longer be at his Father's finding, go to him for every thing.

IV. A fourth denial of God which Fulness will breed, is a denial of Obedience, a refusal to submit to him and his holy Commands. And who so refuses him, doth as good as in plain terms deny him. This was *Pharaoh's* denial of God, *Exod. v. 2.* when God commanded him to release the *Hebrews* out of Bondage; What saith he? *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* And is not this the temper of the great Ones of the World? That whereas poor men oft-times submit, *Prov. xviii. 23.* *The poor man uses entreaties, but the rich answers roughly:* snuffs at God's Commands, opposes, rejects them: *Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from us, Psal. ii. 3.* This *Moses* reproves in *Israel, Deut. xxxii. 15.* *Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked, and lightly*

lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. This Fulness makes us conceive our selves free from controul, Psal. xii. 4. *Our lips are our own, who is LORD over us?* It tempts us to a lawless, licentious flinging off God's Word and Will, that it can take no place with us at all. Serm. V.

V. There is a fifth denial of God; in withdrawing our trust and confidence in God, and placing it in our selves, and in our abundance. And to this, Fulness makes us prone. Thence those that are full of the World, are described to be they that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, Psal. xlix. 6. St. Paul forewarns rich men of this evil; *Charge them that are rich, that they trust not in riches, but in the living God,* 1 Tim. vi. 17. This is the main bane of Riches; for this especially is Covetousness called Idolatry, Col. iii. 5. because men trust in them, and that inordinately, as counter-means against God; not subordinately, as under-means to God. As Confidence in God is one of the greatest acknowledgments of God: so to rely on riches is one of the greatest denials of God; and is, saith the Apostle, the worldly man's Idolatry. So that we may invert the words of the Psalmist, *Their Idols are silver and gold,* and say, Silver and Gold are their Idols, in those they trust. This is a main denial of God, as Job speaks, clearing himself from this sin especially, Chap. xxxi. 24, 28. *If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, thou art my confidence; Oh! then I should have denied the God that is above.* Tell a rich man of trusting in God, he laughs at you, and derides any confidence but in his Purse: They mock at those that talk of any other confidence than in their substance; *Te have shamed, or scorned, the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge,* Psal. xiv. 6. They laugh at that safety, *He trusted in God, let Him deliver him.*

Vidimus periculum divitiarum. Thus we have seen the danger of Riches: now comes,

Secondly, The particular Motive that stirs him up to pray against Poverty, the danger he forecasts in that estate. What's that? Poverty hath many inconveniences. 'Tis an easie thing to furnish our selves with reasons to pray against it.

First, Want it self is a great motive; to be destitute of those succours and comforts that our life stands in need of.

Secondly, Contempt is another attendant upon Poverty; and to an ingenuous nature 'tis very grievous to be despised, and vilified. Stand thou here, or sit under my foot-stool; Jam. ii. 3. *I am poor, and despised,* saith David; *A poor man's good parts are despised,* Eccles. ix. 16. David prays against that, *Make me not a scorn.*

Thirdly, Necessity of seeking relief of others, that's a great burthen to some; *To beg I am ashamed,* Luke xvi. 3. It makes us become Suiters to others, and that's grievous to an ingenuous disposition. *Molestum verbum est, & onerosum, & dimisso vultu dicendum,* Rogo. Sen. *The borrower is a servant to the lender,* Prov. xxii. 7. much more the beggar. He is at the command of him that relieves him. *Qui dat, superiorem se putat.* Hier.

Fourthly, Poverty makes a man obnoxious to any injury, subject to oppression, unable to withstand wrongs; as grounds without fences lye open to any Beasts. They grind the faces of the poor. All these are great inconveniences. Yet this Holy man overlooks all these, can digest them well enough, if God call him to poverty. That which most troubles him, is the sinful temptations that Poverty brings with it, and they are two;

I. An unlawful supply of his necessities, by the sin of Stealing.

II. An impious pleading for himself, and out-facing his Theft by taking the Name of God in vain. The Jews, coming poor out of Babylon, held it no great sin to steal for supply of their necessities, and then to forswear themselves for the better hiding of their Theft. Therefore,

I. He fears Thievery.

II. He fears too, lest that should occasion and usher in a worse sin, *Forswearing and Perjury.*

I. The first danger he prays against, is the temptation to Theft; and that (taken in the strictest terms) is a secret close putting to our hand to our neighbours goods,

Serm. V. goods, the withdrawing and taking them away without their allowance, and applying them to our own use. A sin,

1. Expressly forbidden in the Law of God, not only in the Judicial Law, but in the Moral Law, the Law of Nature.

2. 'Tis not forbidden by way of consequence and deduction, as some sins are, (as the sins of Drunkenness, Incest, Usury, Oppression) but 'tis set in the front of the Commandment in Text-Letters. There needs no expounding, or proving of it from the Commandment; but at first sight ye read it in the Commandment, *Thou shalt not steal.*

3. 'Tis not only forbidden in the Law, but the Gospel; that forbids it, that enforces that Commandment; *Let him that stole, steal no more*, Ephes. iv. 28.

4. 'Tis forbidden in the dreadfullest manner, upon the peril of Damnation, 1 Cor. iv. 10. *Thieves shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; 1 Thess. iv. 6. *Let no man defraud his Brother, because God is the avenger of all such.* In the fifth Chapter of Zechary we read of a Book full of Plagues and Curses which shall cleave unto the Thief, and enter into his house. The Book is large, twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad; 'tis full of Curses even from one end to the other: it shall come swiftly upon him; for 'tis a flying Book; it shall bring a fire with it, to consume his whole substance, and without Repentance, prepare unto the fire of Hell.

'Tis a sin utterly unlawful, take it in the most excusable way that can be. If any Theft be lawful, these Pleas may seem reasonable.

(1.) 'Tis *mihi necessarium*, I steal for necessity and no more, to relieve my charge, to maintain life. That's the tolerablest kind of Theft that may be, and they that are guilty of it, are most to be pitied, Prov. vi. 30. *Men do not despise a Thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry*; but yet, if he be found, he must smart for it, Verse 31. the Law lays hold on him. No necessity can make any sin warrantable. If thou mayest steal to save thy life, then thou mayest forswear to save thy life. "Nay, saith St. *Augustine*, thou mayest not tell a Lie to save thy life, "much less steal." 'Tis necessary thou shouldest not sin, 'tis not necessary that thou shouldest *my* steal.

(2.) 'Tis *proximo superfluum*, that's a second Plea; I rob not the Poor, I steal not from a Needy man, but from him who may well spare it, he is never the poorer for it. No, not this Plea can make it warrantable. God takes order not only to secure the Poor, but the Rich man's estate. *David* in his necessity durst not lay his hand upon *Nabal's* abundance, but sent and sued to him for supply of his wants.

(3.) 'Tis *in se parvum*: the thing I steal, it is in it self but small, of no great value or moment, and *parvitas materiæ* may make it venial. 'Tis but the breaking of an hedge, or taking a little corn out of the sheaf, &c. No, no, the smallness of the matter, if valuable by thy Neighbour, cannot excuse thee. There is *magna injuria*, though not *magnum damnum*; the injustice is great, though the damage be not. Say then, *Parva res, parva res est*; yet *in re parva infidelem esse, magnum est*: to deal falsely in a little, is no little sin. Defrauding of the Priest in *Mint* and *Anise* no great damage, but yet the Pharisees made Conscience of it. And Christ tells them, they are bound to do it. God's Law *curat de minimis*: the prohibition about the birds nest, the smallest Commandment, yet strictly enjoined, *Deut. xxii. 6.*

(4.) *Pauperibus irrogandum*. The Rich should bestow these helps upon us; we take but what the Law of Charity binds them to give. True, and yet this will not excuse thee. The Rich are bound to relieve the Poor, and blessed is he that doth it, and cursed are they that are hard-hearted and mercilefs. But yet it warrants not thy taking without his allowance. Because he is unmerciful, thou must not be unrighteous. Suppose it were due to thee, yet thou must not take it till he give it thee.

(5.) 'Tis *ex voto restituendum*, that's a fifth Plea; I will make him satisfaction, I mean to restore it when God shall enable me. That's somewhat indeed, but neither doth this allow thee to steal. Satisfaction makes it not to be no sin, but to be a pardonable sin, for which thou mayest find mercy. Satisfaction, if it be forced upon thee, is a punishment for sin; if it be voluntary, 'tis a condition and means for remission of sin, but no excuse for it.

Sothen, in that this Holy man prays against the sin of Theft, here are three truths supposed: Serm. V.

[1.] The first truth supposed is (*Lest I steal*) that there is *nulla communitas*: We live not here in a community of all things: all mens goods are not common to all. There is a distinction and propriety that God hath given in *several* to mens Estates and Possessions; and to every man a proper, special, personal Right in his Lands and Goods. If it were not so, there could be no place for Riches and Poverty. If all things were common, all would be alike; than which equality, nothing is more unequal. There would be little industry. If mens Goods and Lands were not their own, who would be found to take care of them, or bestow any pains about them? There would be no such thing as stealing and thieving. That which is every mans, any man may take and be blameless. A man cannot steal that which is his own already.

But God hath not turned us into Common, Catch that catch can, as if Occupancy were the only good Title and Tenure in the world. *He hath divided to the Nations their inheritance*, Deut: xxxii. 8. *He hath determined to all Nations of men the bounds of their habitation*, Acts xvii. 26.

True, may some say, in the times of the Law, God apportioned to every man his several possession; but yet two times are supposed when all things were common:

1. In the state of Innocency: that, they say, should have been a state of Community. *Meum* and *Tuum*, these possessive words came in afterwards. Nay, verily, if that Command, *Thou shalt not steal*, be moral (as certainly it is) then it was given to Adam in Innocency. And so, had he and his posterity continued in Innocency, they must have kept it. The Law that taught Adam Theft was a sin, taught him this Truth, that several men should have several possessions.

2. A second estate that is pretended, is the state of the Gospel. That (say the Anabaptists) broke down all Fences, laid open all Inclosures, made all level and common: *Act. ii. 44*. The Disciples had all things common. True, they had so; but not by a legal community, but by a charitable communication. Let thy Fountain be thine own, but yet let the waters run over and be dispersed in the streets. *St. John* forbids Publicans and Souldiers to wrong men in their Estates, *Luke iii. 14*. *Do violence to no man*, &c. Our Saviour, *Luke xii.* allowed Possession in the two Brethren who came to him to divide their Estate. And he who bad them, Sell, and give to the Poor, supposed that they possessed all, and the Poor had no title to it, but upon gift and charity, *Luke xii. 33*. *Sell, and give*: They are the words of propriety; they strengthen possession, while they command a charitable contribution. And God hath set the eighth Commandment as an hedge (and keeps it up at this day in full force and strength) as a fence to every mans possession: and he that goes about to break the hedge, a Serpent shall bite him, as *Solomon* speaks, *Eccles. viii. 10*.

[2.] There is yet a second truth implied in the Motive, *Lest I steal*. Why? *Agur* was an holy man, a child of God, an heir of the promises, justified, and adopted, had not he right to all things, a just Title to the Creatures? might not he challenge them as his own without stealth or usurpation? No verily. He plainly confesses this truth. Had he taken the possessions of another man violently, it had been theft and injustice in him; he had no title or claim to them. And this is *Propositio prægnaus*: There is a double Truth in it.

1. Had the Possessor been a wicked man, yet he had right and title to them.

2. Though *Agur* be an holy man, yet he had no just warrant or title to claim them.

1. A wicked man's title to these temporal things is good and warrantable. They are not meer Usurpers, neither shall they be proceeded against at the last day as meer Usurpers, but they are lawful Owners and Possessours. 'Tis a true Maxim in Divinity, *Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia*. God, as he is the God of Nature, by common Providence allots to the Sons of men their lawful possessions, and that to the wicked. He that gave *Canaan* to *Jacob*, gave *Mount-Seir* to *Esau*. *Isaac* had his bounds, and *Abimelech*, an Heathenish King, had his; both enjoyed a peaceable possession. Heark *Saint Augustine*: *Sunt bona, quæ Deus dat inimicis suis; sunt alia, quæ servat solis amicis. Externa omnia premixtè data sunt, & bonis, & malis*. And we read of *Abraham*, that he bought a burying place of the

Serm. V. of the sons of *Heth*, he doth not challenge it; and *Jacob*, corn of the *Egyptians*. By which they did acknowledge that these wicked men and Idolaters had a lawful title to those temporal things. Neither did we ever read of any of the Saints and Servants of God, that *sub titulo gratiæ*, did *involare in bona impiorum*, or did *novum aliquid jus temporale sibi vindicare*.

But is the title of wicked men as good as ever it was? No verily, there is a flaw in it. We all forfeited our right in *Adam*, and every wicked man lies under that forfeiture. But Gods patience forbears him. His forfeiture is not sued out, nor a Writ of Ejection brought against him; and so he is *bonæ fidei possessor*, he is lawfully possessed of them. As a Felon, though he hath forfeited his life and goods to the Kings Justice, lyes at his mercy; and till he sues out his pardon, he is still subject to ejection when the King pleases: but yet while the King forbears him, his possession is good and lawful, and no man may disturb him. A wicked man hath as much right to his goods, as he hath to his life; he hath forfeited that to God: and till he be reconciled to God, the forfeiture is not forgiven him: Yet for all this, 'tis lawful for him to live, and no man may slay him. That's the first Proposition.

2. A second Proposition: *Agur*, though a Saint, yet hath no title or claim to another mans goods. It had been theft in *Agur* to have usurped them. 'Twas no Divinity in *St. Paul's* time, that the Saints had right and title to the goods of the Wicked. He tells of Servants that were Christians, and their Masters but Infidels, and yet gives them charge not to be Purloyners, *Tit. ii. 10*. It had been pilfering and stealing in Christians, to take even from Pagans and Infidels.

So then Christianity doth not entitle us to the goods of other men. It makes not Theft to be no Theft in Christians; no lawful possession to be usurpation in an Heathen or Infidel. But yet Christianity doth better our title to the things which we possess, and that in a threefold respect.

(1.) *Restituit.*

(2.) *Corroborat.*

(3.) *Sanctificat.*

(1.) *Restituit.* It makes up the breach in our Original Patent and Charter, by which we hold the things of this life. By the fall of *Adam*, and by our own wickedness, we forfeited Gods Primitive donation of our right in the Creatures. But Christianity sues out our pardon, obtains a release of our forfeiture, sets us *in statu quo*, cancels our former Bond that was forfeited.

(2.) *Corroborat.* Christianity doth not only restore, but strengthens our title, makes it firmer and better to us. Our estate is assured and entailed to us in Christ. That gives us a more honourable and stronger title. We held before in baser Tenure, as it were, in Villanage, now we hold *in Capite*. Christ is our Head, and in him we hold it, *1 Cor. iii.*

(3.) *Sanctificat.* Christianity sanctifies and makes our title and use of all Creatures more comfortable to us. It removes the curse and poison sin brings upon them, so that we can use them with a clean conscience, and with assurance of comfort in them. It speaks to us in *Solomon's* language, *Go thy way, Eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry heart; for God now accepts thy works*. Indeed Gods Providence is over all; *sed curam sibi Ecclesia vindicat*, saith *Bernard*. His main care is for the household of Faith. *St. Paul* tells us, that God hath created these comforts to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. This more especial Providence of God, made *David* say, *A little that the righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*, *Psal. xxxvii. 16*. A good Christian with a little Estate, may have more pleasure, feel more comfort, see more of Gods bounty and mercy, than a man of vast Possessions, whose heart cannot lift it self above the Earth.

[3.] A third Truth observable in that *Agur* prays against this sin of stealing is, that *True Piety will breed true Integrity and Honesty*. This is the disposition of a true pious man, he is exceeding careful to be injurious to no man. *Agur* begs of God to keep him from this evil of wronging any man, or doing any injury to him. Christianity, it always breeds Innocency. Justice and honest dealing a Christian makes

great

great Conscience of. This honest dealing puts credit upon Religion, that the Professours thereof are just in their dealings. And on the contrary, 'tis a reproach to Religion, that they that will be counted the great Zealots of it, deal falsely, cheatingly, unconscionably. Paul charges Servants to deal justly, *that the Gospel of God be not evil spoken of*. The Patriarchs, how were they troubled when they found the money in their Sacks they brought back again? How confident was Jacob, that there was no Thief in his Family, when Laban came after him. *With whomsoever thou findest thy goods, let him not live*, Gen. xxxi. 32.

See the vertue and goodness of Christianity touching this point, in three degrees:

1. It makes a man abstain from doing any injury or wrong to his Brethren. Let him be as bad as can be, Christianity will make him tame and innocent. *One-fimus* a pilfering runagate, after Paul converted him, honest and faithful. By the Gospel the Lyon is made to feed with the Lamb: no devouring, or destroying in all my holy mountains. What a shame is it for a Christian to be accounted false, fraudulent, untrusty?

2. A Christian stays not here, not only forbears to wrong the goods of his neighbour, but is careful to preserve them. 'Tis a poor commendation for a Christian to be harmless. *Parum si sic, sed utinam vel sic*, Aug. And yet it were well if the great Professours of the Gospel amongst us were such, not injurious, or fraudulent. But far more is required of them, to wit, that they be useful, helpful unto others. Deut. xxii. 1. *Thou shalt not see thy brothers Ox, or his Sheep go astray and hide thyself from them, thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother*. How helpful was Moses to rescue the flock of Jethro from the violence of other Shepherds? Exod. ii. 17. See this goodness in David and his followers, though War-like-men, yet no Free-booters nor Plunderers. What a testimony do Nabal's servants give of them? 1 Sam. xxv. 15, 16. *The men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall unto us, both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep*.

3. A good Christian aims higher yet, he desires to be beneficial and helpful to others even in his poverty. Christianity gives a poor man a charitable, a merciful heart. The poor widow of Sarepta, how freely did she relieve Elijah? Thus St. Paul exhorts, Eph. iv. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good*. Why so? that he may maintain himself and his Family. Nay, *that he may give to him that needeth*. This he highly commends in the Macedonians, their poverty did not choke and stifle their liberality, but 2 Cor. viii. 2. *Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality*. Poverty, deep poverty, and yet rich, and abundant liberality. They imitate Christ in this; He was poor, was fain to be relieved, yet he had care to communicate to the poor: Joh. xiii. 29. *They thought he had bid Judas give something to the poor*. The poor widow, Mark. xii. 42. *threw in her two mites, which was all her living*. This shews a right-bred Christian, he will be so far from stealing and wronging any manner of way, as that he is ready to preserve; nay, according to his ability, to supply the wants of his Neighbour.

We have done with the first evil he fears in Poverty, his unlawful supply of his necessities by stealing.

Secondly, A second evil he fears, that Poverty will bring him to Theft; and then that will tempt him to the denial and outfacing of his Theft by the sin of Perjury, *Lest I take the name of my God in vain*. In it observe two things:

I. The sin it self, that's false-swearing.

II. The aggravation of this sin, that's in this word, *My God*.

I. Not to enter into any large discourse of this sin of Perjury, which is a grievous sin, injurious to God, pernicious to our Neighbour, destructive to our selves, exposing us to a curse, Zech. v. 4. Observe here, by this supposal of this Holy man, the practice and guile of sin, 'twill labour to hide and conceal it self, though it be with Perjury. Take it in three gradual corruptions:

1. Peccatum

Serm. V.

1. *Peccatum velandum*; that's the first corruption. The first care of a wicked man, is to hide and conceal his sin. We learned it of our first Parents. As soon as we have sinned, then we bethink our selves of some fig-leaves, run into a thicket, keep our sins close, beware of discovery. We sit upon them, as *Richel* did upon her stolen gods, excuse and cover them. *Job* makes this one Argument of his integrity, that he did not practise this art of concealment, *Job xxxi. 33. If I have covered my transgression, as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom. Adam's fig-leaves were as sinful, as his eating the forbidden fruit. Peccavit in folio, as well as in fructu.* We had rather strike the poyson inwards, then let it break outward in a true confession. Like the *Lacedæmonian* Thief, who having stoln a Fox, hid it in his bosom, and let it gnaw out his heart, rather than to bring it forth into open discovery. What's this, but, to save a deformity in the face, to strike the disease inwardly? And that proves deadly: *He that hides his sin, shall not prosper, Prov. xxviii. 13.*

2. *Peccatum peccato velandum*; that's a second corruption. Sin, rather than it will not be covered, will put on another sin to hide and conceal it. How doth *David* plot and contrive the concealing of his adultery? First he sends for *Uriah* home, and commands him to go to his wife. When this took not, he makes him drunk, thinking wine would perswade him better than words: When neither would do, he murders him and marries his wife. -Oh! a sinner will dig into Hell to hide his sin, if it be possible.

3. *Minus majori velandum*; that's a third corruption. A sinner sticks not at any sin that will serve to cover it. Perjury, a far more heinous sin than Theft, and by Gods Law deemed to a more heavy punishment. Perjury is a sin against God; Theft against our Brother in his goods. A mans name is of more value than his goods; much more is God's name: How much is that to be preferred before the goods of any man? yet see, when sin is once acted, it will not stick at any thing to conceal it self. *Bathsheba's* great belly must be concealed with the sin of murder. *St. James* saith, *He that saith, Do not commit adultery, saith also, Thou shalt not kill, Chap. ii. 11.* a close insinuation, that Adultery will labour to conceal it self, though it be with murder. *Ahab's* covetousness must be compassed by the murder of *Naboth, Prov. i. 19. Such are the ways of every one that's greedy of gain, he will take away the life of the owners thereof.*

'Tis strange, in other Cases men are more chary and circumspect than to incur greater mischief to escape the less. What should be the inducement to make a man adventure upon perjury to conceal his theft? Conceive these two inducements, such as they be.

1. *Probrosum non probroso velandum.* A sinner counts it great wisdom to hide a shaming sin by the overture of another sin that's not so shaming. Stealing, Oh! that's a base, infamous sin, men are ashamed of it; every one points at a Thief, and scorns him: *They cried after him, as after a thief; Job xxx. 5.* But the curtesie of the World thinks not so basely of Swearing and Perjury. God's name may be prophaned, and none cries shame of it. Nay, Oaths serve for Ornaments of Speech among men; he is of a low Spirit that fears an Oath. And here is the choice of the World, rather a great sin than a little shame.

2. *Periculosum non periculofo velandum.* Theft, that's a dangerous sin; if it be detected, it may cost us dear: The Law lays hold of it, it hazards our goods, and lives, and all. But forswearing hath no such Penalty; and therefore if an Oath will free us, though it be a false one, we will not stick at it. Here's the preposterous perversness of the world, to venture upon a sin to escape a punishment; when as religious persons have rather chosen the greatest punishment, than the least sin. It was a worthy Speech of an excellent woman in *St. Hierome* upon the Rack; *Non ideo negare volo, ne peream, sed ideo mentiri nolo, ne peccem.* *Daniel* chose rather to be thrown to the Lions, than to violate his conscience, and so to have a Lion roaring in his bosom.

So much of this sin that he feared: Come we now,

II. To the aggravation *Agur* puts upon this sin of Perjury, *My God; To take the name of my God in vain.*

1. 'Tis *vox obligationis*: He is *My God*, by special interest and relation; that's a strong engagement to keep from sin. Say not, *He is my God, therefore I may presume upon him*: but, *He is my God, therefore I must not, I dare not offend him*. Because he is a God, I will be afraid to provoke him; and because he is Mine, I have interest in him. I will be afraid to forfeit him.

2. 'Tis *vox specialis appropinquationis*: This Holy man considering himself in danger, upon the brink of such a downfall as Perjury is, presently he runs nearer and closer to God. As a Child scared, or affrighted, runs up close to his Mother; so he runs to God, flies to him, fastens upon him with this word of Affiance, *My God*; as if he had bespoken him in *David's* words, *O, keep thy servant from this presumptuous sin*. O! 'tis good at all times, but especially in temptations to draw nigh to God.

3. 'Tis *vox detestationis*: He will not unhallow the name of his God, he detests the thoughts of it. Let Ruffians swear and forswear by him, they have no power in him; but, he is my God, I will exalt him. Oh! let that Name be provoked. What? shall I pawn that precious Name, yea, and forfeit it for every trifle? A Christian hath nothing that's so much his own, as his God, and his soul. Oh! Adore thy God, and preserve thy soul above all things.

This is that, that makes Perjury so great a sin; not only the falseness, but the lewd unhallowing of the Name of God. The Heathen, how careful were they to preserve the honour of the names of their gods? *Micah* iv. 5. *All people will walk, every one in the name of his God, &c.* *Belshazzar* praised the name of his gods, even of wood and stone, *Dan* v. 4. Let them be wooden gods, he would not dishonour them. The Scripture calls the Name of God,

1. *Sacred, Holy and reverent is his Name*: then do not prophane it.

2. *Moses* calls it the *fearful and dreadful Name of the LORD thy God*: Oh! then tremble and stand in awe of it.

3. 'Tis called *Jealous*; *His Name is jealous*, saith *Moses*. Oh! therefore do not provoke it.

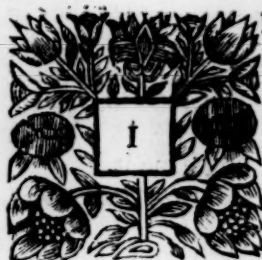
4. 'Tis *vox oppositionis*; It implies an opposition to the spirit of a proud worldling. His sin is denial of God. He saith, *Who is the LORD?* He knows no other Gods but his full Bags and Abundance. But Poverty, though it hath its temptations, yet it exposes not to prophane Atheism. A poor man can own God more easily, and sooner tremble at him, than the wealthy man puffed up with riches. Poverty can better comply with Piety; 'tis more tractable and teachable, and of more awful apprehensions of God than the voluptuous or covetous enjoyers of abundance. The sins of rich men are most-what bold, presumptuous sins; *they neither fear God, nor reverence man*: but the poor man's temptations are not so daring; he bids not defiance to the knowledge of God.

TWO

SERMONS

On LUKE xii. 4, 5.

And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell, yea, I say unto you, Fear him.



IN this Chapter (as in other the Evangelists, that are answerable to it) our Saviour furnishes his Disciples with many Instructions, for the worthy discharge of their function in preaching the Gospel. Especially he commends unto them two gracious qualifications, which will be exceeding requisite for their pious and comfortable performance of that weighty service.

First, he commends unto them the grace and virtue of sincerity, Verse 1. *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisie.* Indeed a double sincerity is required of them, both of them opposite to Pharisaical leaven.

First, Sinceritas Doctrinae; that they be exceeding careful to preserve the Doctrine of Christ pure, and sincere, and uncorrupted, that it be *ἀσπορον γάλα*, as St. Peter calls it, *The sincere milk of the Word.* That they believe nothing, teach nothing; but the truth of the Gospel, not mixed, not blended with any false inventions. And then the second is,

Secondly, Sinceritas Conscientiæ; That's another part of sincerity, that is required in this profession of Christianity, that *singleness of heart, and all godly sincerity*, they may have their conversation in the profession of the Gospel. Yes, these two, sound Doctrine, that cannot be reprov'd, and a sincere heart, that needs not be ashamed; a good cause, and a good conscience, are necessary requisites, and will prove comfortable supports, whatever may befall us.

Secondly, Our Saviour having premised this useful instruction, he furnishes them with a second, that will be exceeding needful and advantageous to them; that's an holy courage and confidence in the course of Christianity. The Gospel is like to breed them enemies, they are to deal with unreasonable men, that will malign and oppose them, yea, vex and persecute them. Against this discouragement our Saviour adds this seasonable admonition, *Fear not those that kill the body, but fear him who (if you fail in your Duty) can cast both body and Soul into Hell.*

So then, the words I have read unto you, are a seasonable direction, which Christ gives to his Disciples and in them to all Christians, how to rectifie and order their fear: not to misplace it, either by fearing what they need not fear; or by slighting what they ought to dread and tremble at: not to be like Children, play with fire that will burn them, and tremble at some mock-fear that cannot hurt them. The malice and mischief that comes from men, fear not that, faith Christ; but the wrath and vengeance that comes from God, let that be your fear, be sure to escape that.

In the words we may observe three things.

First, Here is a ponderous, and perswasive Introduction, and Preface, *I say unto you, my friends.* Serm. I.

Secondly, Here is a serious Exhortation and Admonition, *Fear not them that can kill the body; but fear him that can destroy both soul, and body, and cast them into Hell.*

Thirdly, Here is a strong and effectual confirmation of what he hath said to them, *Yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

First, Come we to the Preface and Introduction, in these words, *I say unto you, my friends.* And we may consider it in a double apprehension.

First, 'Tis weighty and ponderous, that's in these words, *I say unto you.*

Secondly, Then 'tis sweet and gracious, in this winning and perswasive compellation, *My friends.*

First, 'Tis weighty and ponderous, *I say unto you.* 'Tis a form of Speech which the Scripture uses in matters of great weight and importance. Thus St. Paul speaks to the *Galatians*, to establish them in the truth of the Gospel, from which they were falling, *Chap. iv. 2. Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.* He confirms his assertion by a strong asseveration, *I Paul say unto you.* He owns this weighty Doctrine, and will stand to it. So our Saviour in *Luk. xiii.* reproving the uncharitable censuring of other mens miseries, seals up his reproof with this ratification, *I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Thus likewise he strengthens his threatening of *Capernaum* for their impenitency, *Mat. xi. 24. I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. Ego dico, verba sunt* ἀξιωματικά, of great force and efficacy.

And we may resolve the strength of this Speech into these three expressions.

I. Look to the truth of what Christ saith, and then 'tis a Speech of great assurance and certainty, and so challenges our full assent unto it. It runs in the style and Language of Infallibility; *Teste meipso*, Witness our selves. The great Doctor and Author of Truth hath said it: He that is the *Amen*, the true and infallible Witness; He, that can neither deceive nor be deceived; he assures us of it.

II. Look upon the Text, as it carries with it matter of counsel and advice, whom we should fear, and whom we should not fear, how we should carry our selves in dangers and distresses, and so 'tis a Speech of great fidelity; *I say unto you*, the wise and faithful Counsellour, he that foresees our dangers, and tenders our welfare, and forecasts all the events that shall befall us, he gives us this counsel. 'Tis a faithful Speech and advice, a *direction worthy of all acceptance.* That's the second.

III. Look upon the Text, as it contains a severe commination and threatening; *Fear him that is able to cast you into Hell:* and then these words, *I say unto you*, are a Speech of great power and authority; *I say unto you*, I, that am the Sovereign Lawgiver and the supreme Judge; I, that will make good all threatnings; I, before whom Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my word shall be fulfilled; I, before whose tribunal, both the fearless and the fearful shall stand and tremble, *I say unto you;* and so 'tis a speech of great Power and Authority.

I, the infallible Doctor.

I, the Faithful Counsellour.

I, the Supreme Judge: that's the weightiness of the Preface. But then this Preface and Introduction,

Secondly, 'Tis exceeding sweet and gracious; 'tis expressed in this winning, and perswasive, and adjuring compellation; *Amici mei, my friends.* And it hath many importances in it, it looks diverse ways.

I. This Compellation, *My friends*, it dignifies the Persons of his Disciples, sets an high price and reputation upon them. 'Tis the honour that Faith puts upon us. *Fides, servos promovet in amicos*, of servants it makes us become friends of God. Good Christians in general, and in special; they that preach Christ, propagate his Gospel, study to enlarge and advance his Kingdom, Christ counts them his choice friends.

Serm. I.

Abraham, that Holy man, he is termed the Friend of God, James ii. 23. John Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ in the hearts of the People, was the friend of the Bridegroom, Joh. iii. 29. Let the World account of them as they please, slight them, despise them, set them at nought, a good Christian, a faithful Minister, Christ sets highly by them, he accounts and calls them his dearest friends.

II. This Compellation qualifies the counsel, which Christ here gives to them. 'Tis the cordial counsel of a loving friend to his beloved friends. There are pretenders of friendship in the world, that will give quite contrary counsel to this of Christ, and think they do the office of very good friends, in their advising of us. "If the times be dangerous, provide for your selves, be sure to hold with the strongest party, run not your selves into hazards and dangers, beware of displeasing those that may hurt you. This is the friendship and counsel of the world. Such friendly counsel St. Peter would be giving to our Saviour Christ, when Christ tells them what he should suffer: *Oh! Master, saith Peter, Save thy self, be that far from thee, this shall not be unto thee.*" What saith Christ to him? *Get thee behind me Satan.* So far was Christ from owning him for a friend in this his advice, that he calls him Satan; the name of our great Adversary and Enemy. Such friends David had, that bid him shift for himself, forsake his station and confidence in God; that said unto his soul, *Flee as a bird unto the Mountains,* Psal. xi. 1. And such friends Nehemiah had, that bid him withdraw himself from the building of Jerusalem, and to take Sanctuary, and hide himself. And such kind of friendship the Pharisees pretended to Christ, *Go, get thee out and depart from hence, for Herod will kill thee,* Luk. xiii. 31. Such there be, if you listen to them, that will perswade us to chuse iniquity rather than affliction, as Job speaks: Be sure to sleep in a whole skin, though it cost thee the wounding of a good Conscience. No, that's the truest friendship that advises us to keep and preserve a good Conscience, persist in our integrity, whatsoever comes of it, prefer the favour of God before the favour or friendship of the world. 'Tis the truest friendship to forewarn us of the greatest dangers, and such above all are spiritual hazards; take heed of hell, incur not the wrath of God, please not men to the displeasing of God. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we perswade men;* not by the terrors of men, to mislead and seduce them.

III. This Compellation, as it foretells their sufferings, so it acquaints them with the cause of them, *My friends, the world will hate you.* God's friends shall be accounted the worst enemies; the world will persecute them, they must look for hard measure from the hands of Worldlings. *If they hated me (saith Christ) they will hate you also; if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you.* 'Tis a note, by which Christ will have his followers and friends known in the world; *Ye shall have tribulation,* Joh. xvi. 20. *All that will live godly in this world, shall suffer persecution,* 2 Tim. iii. 12. Christ forewarns us of it. It was one of the first Lessons he taught St. Paul, and shewed him how great things he should suffer for his Name sake, *Acts 9.* And St. Paul lookt for it. *I know that bonds and imprisonments await me.* As Christ taught it him, so he taught his Scholar Timothy this lesson: having given him other directions, he adds this, 2 Tim. iii. 1. *This know also, take this lesson along with you, In the last days there will come perillous times, men will be haters of those that are good;* he must be partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel.

And ye shall see the reasons of it;

1. There is a strangeness 'twixt God's friends, and the men of this world. Christ gives this reason of the worlds ill usage of his friends and followers: *They are not of the world; if they were, the world would love their own,* Joh. xv. 19. Strangers must look for hard usage. We must not wonder, saith Peter, *think it strange to suffer as strangers.* God foretold it to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13. *Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall afflict them.* Ezekiel tells us, 'tis the guise of the world, they oppress the stranger wrongfully. Chap. xx. 29. *Mundani, hospitibus feri. Sicut canes ad peregrinos, sic mundus latrat ad insolitam veritatem.* Dogs will bark and fall upon strangers.

2. There is not only a strangeness, but which is more, there is an hatred and enmity that the world bears to the friends of God. *The seed of the woman must look for enmity*

enmity from the seed of the Serpent. God's friends are still esteemed and used as the worlds enemies. And 'tis both causeless hatred, as *David* speaks, *They hate me without a cause*, P^{sa}. xxxv. 7. and 'tis cruel hatred, *They hate me with cruel hatred*, P^{sa}. xxv. 19. 'tis *ad exterminium*, a destructive hatred. *Isaiah* tells of such, *Your brethren have hated you, and cast you out for my Names sake*. Cast them out, ejected them, rooted them out from their Dwelling; made them to seek their bread in desolate places.

Serm. I

3. This enmity, 'tis the worst kind of enmity. The world bears an antipathy against God's Servants and Friends. 'Tis an hatred that is planted and rooted in their Nature. Christ tells his Disciples, *I send you as Lambs among Wolves*. There are other Creatures hurtful to Lambs; but none like the Wolf. There's an inbred antipathy 'twixt the Lamb and Wolf. Indeed the antipathy of the Lamb, 'tis but an antipathy of fear; but the antipathy of the Wolf is an antipathy of destruction. It must suck the blood of the Lamb to satisfy its hatred. The Lambs antipathy is only to shun mischief; but the antipathy of the Wolf is to do mischief. *Solomon* describes such kind of Wolves, though in mens cloathing; *They lay wait for blood, lurk privily for the innocent, without Cause*, Prov. i. 11.

IV. This compellation, it sweetens to them their sad condition. Christ foretels them of sharp persecutions that do await them; bonds, and imprisonment, yea death and destruction will be their Portion; yet see for all this, He calls and accounts them His Friends. It is a gracious compellation; and serves,

1. To confute the world's apprehension of them.

2. It will answer a shrewd temptation, that may arise in themselves.

1. When the world sees them in this sad condition, hated and persecuted, they are ready to pass their hard Censure upon them, they account them forsaken of God, cast out of His care and protection. It was *David's* case, when he was in distress, his enemies insulted over him; *They said, God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him*, P^{sa}. lxxi. 11. And thus the world judged of Christ himself for His Sufferings. They did esteem him *stricken and smitten of God, and afflicted*, *Isa*. liii. 4. The High Priests mocked Him; *He trusted in God, let him deliver Him now, if He will have Him*, Matth. xxvii. 43. Well, let the world think what they please of them, Christ assures them they are near and dear to Him. He esteems and owns them for His beloved friends; *Persecuted they are, but not forsaken*. The enmity of the world may well consist with the amity of God. *He is with them in trouble, He knows their Soul in Adversity*, and doth highly prize them.

2. As it represses the worlds insultation, so it allays and answers the poor afflicted Christian man's sad and sorrowful temptation. A Christian is subject to make uncomfortable constructions of his sufferings and afflictions, ready he is to suspect his condition, that all is not well betwixt God and him, inclined to condemn the generations of Gods children, and that he himself hath in vain kept his integrity. Ye know what *Gideon* said to the Angel, that told him, *God was with him*; O my Lord, said he, *If the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and God hath delivered us into the hands of the Midianites*, Judg. vi. 13. *David* also in his distress, he began to question all those Promises, which God by his Prophets had made unto him, *I said in my haste, all men are liars*, P^{sa}. cxvi. 11. The Prophets have deluded me with false Revelations. 'Tis a sad temptation; but this Scripture here affords us more grace and comfort: It bids us not judge of our spiritual estate and interest in God's love by these outward events; it tells us, God owns us for friends in our worst condition. He is so far from rejecting us in our calamities, that then especially he sets his love upon us. *I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction*, saith God to his People, *Isai*. xlviii. 10. All this fire is but to refine us, not to consume us. St. *Augustine* makes the question; "What? saith he, were those three Worthies in *Daniel* whom he did deliver from the fiery furnace, more dear to God, than those seven Worthies in the *Maccabees*, whom he did not deliver; but suffered them to be slaughtered by their cruel enemies? No, in no wise; in a diverse dispensation there was the same loving affection to both sorts of them.

V. This compellation, *My friends*, hath another importance. He calls them friends, and

Serm. I. and withal bids them take heed of Hell and Damnation. It may seem somewhat strange, that Christ should threaten Hell and Damnation to those whom he loves and accounts his Friends. What the friends of God, are they in the danger of eternal perdition? Indeed some titular and nominal relations there may be betwixt God and us, and yet we may miscarry for all that. The man without the wedding garment, *Matth. xxii. that was cast into utter darkness*, hath the courtesie of this Language afforded him, *Friend, how camest thou hither, not having a Wedding Garment?* And you know what passed betwixt Abraham and Dives, when he was in Hell; *Father Abraham*, said the damned rich man; and, *Son, remember*, said Abraham to him: words of relation, but not of affection. And so Christ bestow'd the courtesie of calling Judas, *Friend*, when he came to betray Christ, *Matth. xxvi. 50. Friend, wherefore art thou come?* But these, whom Christ owns here for his friends, were not nominal, but his real and cordial friends, loving him, and beloved of him, and yet he forbears not to tell them, that, if they look not the better to it, they may incur damnation. It is worth our observing, and laying to our heart; That, *Not only the Promises of Salvation belong to good Christians, but they are concerned in the threatnings of damnation*; they are not set out of the reach and possibility of Hell, if they do wilfully fail of their Duty.

These two assertions are most true; *If a wicked man repent, and turn to God, he shall be pardoned*; and this is as true; *If a righteous man forsakes his righteousness, and falls from God, he shall be condemned*. And it is great love in Christ, to warn us of it. It is a good saying of the Father, *Deus non solum bene faciens, sed comminans bonus est*. We are *tuti, si cauti; securi, si attoniti*. 'Tis a great act of friendship to forewarn us of Hell. Many had never held on in the way to Heaven, but for these threatnings, and terrours, and fear of Hell. O, it is good to nourish these thoughts in us, not to think Hell-fire is already quench'd, it cannot scorch us. What saith Job? *Destruction from the Almighty made me afraid*. And St. Paul to the Hebrews, *Let us have grace to serve God with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire*; Chap. xii. 28. Indeed, a good Christian will make use of both; both of the promises of Heaven, and the threatnings of Hell. *Ama bonitatem, time severitatem*, as Paul expresses it. *Behold*, and lay to heart, *both the goodness and severity of God*; His goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou shalt be cut off, *Rom. xi. 22*.

We have done with the Preface and Introduction; Come we now,

Secondly, To the Admonition; And that we see it twofold,

First, 'Tis Negative, shewing us whom we should not fear, *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do*.

Secondly, 'Tis Positive, shewing us whom we should fear; *But I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear; fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell*.

First, Let us consider the Negative part: and in it two things;

I. The prohibition of the affection, *Be not afraid*.

II. Then here is the representation of the dangers, which we must not fear; And that's expressed,

1. In the aggravation of it, *Such as kill the body*.

2. In the extenuation of it, *They have no more that they can do*. Though they kill you, fear them not; though they do their worst, *Be not afraid of them*; that's the aggravation of the danger: then they can but kill you, more, or worse, they cannot do; therefore fear them not; that's extenuation of the danger.

I. Let us consider the affection prohibited, *Be not afraid*. Christ here puts a law and a restraint upon our fear. Now surely, of all the affections that are planted in our Nature, fear, and the errors arising from fear, are the most excusable and pardonable; especially, when our fear makes us shun, and strive to avoid some great mischief, as this is in the Text, the loss of our lives. Indeed, sins out of delight and pleasure, to make a pastime of sinning, or bold, and audacious, and presumptuous sins, such we all yield are worthily punished: but for a man to fail in his duty, upon the surprisal of fear, lest he suffer some great loss or miscarriage, we hope that will find favour and be excused, *Saul* pleaded that in excuse of his disobedience; *I*

feared

feared the people, and obeyed their voice, 1 Sam. xv. 24. The people might have murdered, if he had not yielded to them. No, see here the irregularities and exorbitances of our fear, are here prohibited. This Plea will not hold at Christ's Tribunal; "I sinned out of fear, not willingly, and upon choice, out of mine own inclination; my fear forced me to it. It is said, Rev. xxi. 8. the fearful are excluded and shut out of Heaven; not only audacious and malicious sinners, but the timorous and fearful, that betray the truth of God out of fear, these have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone, Ver. 8.

Not that all fear of mischief from evil men is unlawful. God allows us this affection of fear in case of dangers, and to provide against them.

1. We may fear mischievous men so far, as not to provoke them, not to give them unnecessary occasion to offer violence to us. Christian fortitude, which is the vertue contrary to fear, is not always seen in *aggrediendis periculis*, but in *sustinendis*; not by putting our selves into dangers, but in a Christian enduring of them, when they fall upon us. The Ecclesiastical Story tells us of a rash unadvised Christian, that plucked down and defaced the Emperours Edict that was published against Christians, for which when he suffered death, the Church would not account him among the Christian Martyrs. An unwarrantable boldness, in provoking of the Enemies, made him incapable of the honour of Martyrdom. In the judgment of the Church, he suffered as an evil doer, and not as a Martyr.

2. We may fear them so far forth, as to shun and avoid them. Christ advises us to be wise as *Serpents* in this sense; to keep out of harms way, to do our best to secure our selves from hurts and mischiefs. We must not *periculis*, rush upon perils. Solomon saith, *A wise man foresees a danger*, and will do his best to avoid it. That speech of our Saviour is remarkable, Luke xvii. 33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life, by ill ways, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.* He doth not say, *Whosoever shall seek to lose his life, thrusts himself upon danger*; but, *Whosoever shall lose it for Christs sake, shall save it.*

So then,

1. We may be careful to avoid them. 'Tis our Saviour's advice, Mat. x. 17. *Προειπετε. Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to Councils.* The Stoicks called this fear, *Caution*; they termed it, *λογικὴ ἐκκλισις ἐλπίσιν*, the wise declining of any hurtful thing.

2. More than so; Our Saviour allows flight from them: Mat. x. 23. *φευγετε, flee from them.* Thus the Prophet *Elijah* fled from *Jezebel's* persecution; he arose and went for his life upon *Jezebel's* threatnings. And the Prophet *Urijah*, he fled from *Jehojakim*, Jer. xxvi. 21. *David*, when *Saul* persecuted him, avoided him by flight, and he wished for the wings of a Dove, to flee away and escape from the stormy wind and tempest, Plal. lv. 6, 8. Such an avoidance of danger, though it arise from fear, yet it may be guided by Faith, and therefore 'tis ascribed and imputed to Faith. 'Tis said, Heb. xi. 23. that by faith *Moses* was hid by his Parents from the fury of *Pharaoh*. 'Twas fear that made them do it, but such a fear as was ordered by Faith. And again, by faith *Moses* forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King. In *Exodus* 'tis said, *Moses* feared, and fled from the face of *Pharaoh*: and yet, because faith directed his fear, St. Paul ascribes his flight to faith, and not to fear. Yea, our blessed Saviour, when his enemies assaulted him, he hid himself from them, Joh. viii. 59. He could have withstood them, *Sed nostræ infirmitati consuluit*, saith *Augustine*, he did it to direct us what we may do in case of persecution.

3. Especially we must so shun and avoid dangers, as to pray against them. That is a sanctified fear, that stirs us up to Prayer. Thus did good *Jacob*, when he heard of *Esau's* marching against him, Gen. xxxii. 11. He betook himself to Prayer: *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him.* This course the Apostles took, when they were threatened by the High-Priests, Acts iv. 24. *They lift up their voice with one accord; O Lord, behold their threatnings.* It was *David's* practice in all his dangers: *Be merciful unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up; they are my adversaries, but I give my self unto Prayer*, Psal. cix. 4. This is a lawful and an holy fear; to avoid mischiefs,

Serm. I. as to Pray against them. That's the second; we may fear them, as to avoid them.

3. We may, nay, we must fear those that persecute us, in another sense, not to condemn them, especially if they be our Governours and Superiours, though they oppress us, yet we must not despise, revile, or curse them. *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it,* 1 Cor. iv. 12. The Angels gave no railing accusation, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* Thus St. Paul exhorts us, *Render to all their dues, fear to whom fear.* We may learn this of the two Disciples, that went to *Emmaus*; when they spake of those that had crucified Christ, they railed not on them, but spake reverently of them, being their Superiours; *The Chief Priests and Rulers, say they, put him to death,* Luke xxiv. 20. St. Peter bids us answer our Persecutors with meekness and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 5. Thus the Apostles in their Prayer against the threatnings of the High Priests and Elders, they prayed for help against them, but not for curses, or vengeance upon them; *Behold their threatnings, and stretch forth thy hand* (not to plague and destroy them, but) by healing, and merciful miracles, to win, and convert them. *Acts* iv. 30.

You have seen how far forth we may fear them: the enquiry now must be, how then must we not fear them; take it in three particulars.

1. We must not fear them so far forth as to be dismayed at them. Not to be overwhelmed with fear, as 'tis said of *Nabal*, when he was told of the danger he was in by *David's* coming against him, 'tis said, *his heart died in him, he became as a stone.* The Book of *Wisdom* calls this fear, *a betraying of the succours, which reason affords,* Chap. xvii. 12. Such a fear, 'tis the wicked man's curse, *Deut* xxviii. 56. *The LORD shall give thee a trembling heart, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life.* *David*, he overmaster'd this fear; *What time I am afraid, do I put my trust in thee,* *Psal.* lvi. 3. His faith over-ruled his fear, that it was not excessive. St. Paul calls it, *not to be terrified by our adversaries,* *Phil.* i. 28. Not to be *ἀσέπεια*, *Luke* xxi. 9. at an utter loss, not at our wits end, not knowing what to do. Our Saviour calls it *ἀποτυχόντων ἀνδράπων*, when mens hearts fail them for fear. The Apostle shews us the moderation of this fear, 2 Cor. iv. 8. *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair.* 'Tis our Saviour's advice, *μηδενίσαντες*, not to be distracted with fear, as the *Israelites* were in *Egypt* with sorrow, that they heeded not God's message by *Moses*, for the anguish of their spirits, and their cruel bondage. The Prophet *Isaiah*, exhorts, and encourages us against this fear; *Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Chap. ii. 22.

2. We must not fear them so far forth, as to be ensnared by them, and so to be brought off to comply with wicked men in their wicked courses. *Solomon* tells us, 'tis one ill consequent of worldly and carnal fear; *The fear of man brings a snare with it,* *Prov.* xxix. 25. Fear may betray us into some sinful actions, even against conscience and resolution. 'Twas so with St. Peter, he meant well, and purposed well to own our Saviour, and to stick to him; but fear surprized and betrayed him into that great sin of denying his Master. The Book of *Job* calls this *the choosing of iniquity, rather than affliction,* Chap. xxxvi. 21. rather to do ill than to suffer ill. The Prophet *Isaiah* forewarns us of this ill fruit of fear, Chap. viii. 12. *Say ye not, A confederacy to all them, to whom this people shall say A confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.* How many Christians both in the Primitive, and latter times of the Church, have fallen into the snare, and been caught by it, and yielded their compliance with Pagans and Idolaters, for fear of persecution? *Origen* and *Marcellinus*, through fear were brought off to Heathenish Sacrifices; *Cranmer* and *Jewel*, forced by fear to sinful subscriptions. These *Austine* calls *flenda naufragia*. Many tall ships have dashed upon this rock, and suffered shipwrack. That's a second, not to fear them, so as to be ensnared by them.

3. We must not fear them so far forth as to be disheartned by them from doing our duty. Many, that have not yielded to the former suggestions of fear to be fetcht into some wicked compliances, yet fear hath made them desist, and forbear, and give over the practice of what God hath enjoyned them. Many there have been,

who

though with *Judas* they would not betray Christ, nor with *Peter* deny him, yet have been content with the other Disciples to withdraw, and forsake him; not publickly to own him, but to stand aloof off, not to adhere to him. Such timorous Disciples Christ met with, *Joh.xxii.42. Many of the chief Rulers believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue.* Christ calls this a *being ashamed of him*, *Mark.viii.38.* Take heed of this fear, 'tis a bashful Devil. This operation of fear hath sometimes surpris'd the Servants of God. *Samuel* felt a grudging of it, *1 Sam.xvi.2.* When God sent him to anoint *David*; *How can I go? if Saul hear of it, he will kill me.* This fear tempted *Jeremy* utterly to give over his Prophetical office, but that God encouraged him. And *Ezekiel* stood in need of this encouragement against the malice of his Enemies; *Son of Man, saith God to him, speak my words unto them, be not afraid of them.* In this case, when God requires our service, *Hester's* resolution must be ours, *If I perish, I perish*: And holy *Daniel's* practice must be our Example, he would not desist from worshipping of God, nor give over his daily Prayers but for thirty days, though it cost him his life. What said *St. Peter*, when the High-Priest threatned him? *Whether we shall obey you, rather than God, judge ye.*

We have seen the affection prohibited; that's *Fear*.

2. Let's see the *το φέσσω*, the danger that *Fear* looks upon, and would avoid. 'Tis not an imaginary danger, such as *Solomon's* Sluggard forecasts, *O! there is a Lyon in the streets, I shall be slain by him*: Nor is it a matter of casualty, such as every course of life is subject to, but 'tis an intended mischief from cruel Enemies; and so such a fear as may fall in *constantem virum*; not to fall into the hands of bloody men, every wise man, you will say, will fear such a danger. Well, yet our Saviour saith, *Fear them not.*

And here we have the danger expressed,

1. With the aggravation of it, 'tis no less than loss of life.

2. With the extenuation of it, they can *but kill the body*, more they cannot do. First, though they *kill the body*, let them do their worst, yet fear them not, that's the aggravation; then they can *but kill the body*, more or worse they cannot do, therefore fear them not, that's the extenuation.

1. Look upon the danger in the aggravation of it, and it hath a double aggravation;

1. The greatness of the danger, 'tis loss of life.

2. The certainty of it, that's a second aggravation, they do kill, suppose that, so that they shall prevail, there is no avoiding it, yet for all that, fear them not.

1. Consider the greatness of the danger. Christ fore-warns them not here of some less annoyances, which Christians must look for from the hands of their Enemies, as sometimes he doth in Scripture.

1. As hatred, and evil will, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my Name sake*, *Mat. x.* causeless hatred, spiteful hatred.

2. Evil words, reproaches, scorns, scandals cast upon them, *Men will speak all manner of evil against you*, *Mat. 5.*

3. Hard measure, unjust usages and oppressions, spoiling of their goods, as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. x.* These are sharp afflictions, but these are not all, nor the worst that Christians must look for in this World. Christ foretells them of the loss of life. Those other sufferings are but *acies novaculae*, the sharper edge of the Razor, it makes bare skin, but yet doth not wound us: But the Text tells us of *os gladii*, the dint and piercing of the Sword, the loss of life, the shedding of their blood, bitter malice of man, that proceeds so far; that's the greatness of it.

2. Then here is the certainty of the danger and mischief. Christ here supposes, the worst that can come; though you be sure to die for it, yet fear them not. Christ doth not say, they will desire to kill you, lay in wait for blood, swear, and vow your destruction, as those forty Conspirators that bound themselves under a curse to kill *St. Paul*, but yet failed of their purpose: No, Christ sets it at the

Serm. I. worst, they shall have their will of you, take your lives from you; yet for all this, be of good courage, *Fear them not*. Here, even at this exigent, Christian Faith and Fortitude will cast out fear.

The Scripture sometimes specifies some lesser, and some lower degrees of Christian Fortitude, and casting off Fear. And there is, saith the Philosopher, *Fortitudo ob spem*: Men may have some grounds of hope to escape danger, and that makes them not fear it. And we find it in *David*, *I hope and trust in the Lord, I will not fear what Man can do unto me*, Psal. lvi. Thus God encourages *Baruck*, tell him *his life shall be given him for a prey*, hard measure he shall meet withall, but his life should be spared, *Jer. xlv*. So Christ assured Saint *Paul* at *Corinth*; *Fear not, Paul, I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee*, Acts xviii. Here Hope casts out fear. Then the Philosopher tells us of another Remedy against Fear; that's *Fortitudo ob experientiam*; when we have escaped the like dangers before, that makes us fearless of other ensuing dangers. And this encouraged *David* in his encounter with *Goliath*: *The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon, and out of the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*. Here experience begat courage, and cast out fear. But these both, both the hope of future deliverance, as also the experience of former deliverance, fell short of that high pitch of Christian Fortitude which Christ sets us here. Though there be no hope of escape, our Enemies shall prevail and over-master us, and wreak their malice upon us, slay and destroy us; yet, saith Christ, *Fear them not*. *Paul* attained to this pitch of Fortitude; when dangers were foretold him, and he was importuned to avoid them, *What*, saith he, *Act. xxi. I am willing, not only to be bound, but to dye at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*. And we may see this fearless and courageous Resolution in those three Worthies in the Book of *Daniel*, when the King threatned to cast them into the fiery Furnace, if they refused to worship his Idol. See what an Answer they gave to his threatnings, *Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, but if he do not deliver us, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not worship thy Golden Image*. Here courage did cast out fear; here Christian fortitude had a perfect work.

Ye have seen the aggravation of the danger, both in the greatness and certainty of it; *Though they kill you, fear them not*. Now,

2. Consider the extenuation of it, they can but kill us, more, or worse they cannot do, therefore, fear them not. Indeed to a carnal man, that hath all his portion in this life, 'tis but cold comfort to tell them, their bodies only shall be killed, no more shall be done to them. Such short-sighted men, that cannot look beyond this world to an eternal life, kill their Bodies, and all is gone and lost with them; they that live, as if they were all Body, and no Soul, the loss of this life is an utter undoing to them, all perishes with them, they look for nothing hereafter. But to a good Christian (and blessed be God, and blessed be that Religion, that assures of it) even in death there is this comfort, that our Enemies cannot destroy us totally, finally; 'tis not in their power to do more to us. Sure he is a well-grounded Christian, that can make a *but* at Bodily Death, that can say with comfort, what the four poor Lepers spake in despair, *2 King. vii. 4. If they kill us, we shall but die*.

And this extenuation hands in a double restriction of the mischief they do to us.

I. 'Tis partial, 'tis but the *killing of the Body*.

II. 'Tis finite and soon ended, *After that they have no more that they can do*.

I. I say 'tis partial, 'tis but the *killing of the body*. And the body,

1. 'Tis *viliior pars*, the meaner and the baser sort of man: Our Souls are more noble and divine. St. *Paul* calls our Bodies, *vile bodies*; I, but our Souls are precious Souls: And our Souls be out of our Enemies reach. *There is no man hath power over the Spirit*, saith *Solomon*, *Ecclef. viii. 8. Anima cujusque is est quisque*. 'Tis the Soul of man, that makes the man. He is happy, whose Soul is happy, whatsoever befalls our bodily life. *Quid agunt, qui mori timent, nisi ut posterius moriantur?* Aug.

2. 'Tis *fragilior pars*; the Body, 'tis the frail and mortal part of man. They kill

kill that which otherwise would die of it self; they do but that to thee which *Serm. II.*
 Old Age, or Sicknes, or Casualty will do. *Quod scorpis, aut febris aut, fungus tol-*
lent, saith *Augustine*. They do no more, than the biting of a Scorpion, or it may be
 the pricking of a Pin, or the shaking of an Ague, or the unwholsomness of some
 Herb may do to thee. Who would reckon much of that life that is subject to so ma-
 ny miscarriages.

3. 'Tis *pars restituenda*; they take away that which they shall not hold from
 thee, it shall be restored to thee again. *Non moritur, quisquis victoriâ occiditur,* saith
Hierom; he is not fully killed that shall live again. That made the Saints not to
 accept of deliverance, that *they might obtain a better Resurrection*. Let them do their
 worst, yet not *an hair of your heads shall perish*, Luk. xxi. 18. O, *si sic custodiantur super-*
flua tua, in quanta securitate est anima tua! August. If our hairs be preserved, how safe
 shall our Souls be? This made *David* for to sing, *Precious in the eyes of the Lord is*
the death of the Saints.

II. As 'tis partial, so 'tis finite; more they cannot do. Not more? Yes, it seems
 they have more that they can do, and *David* complains of it, *Psal. lxxix. 2. The dead*
Bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the Fowls of the Heaven; and the
flesh of thy Saints unto the Beasts of the Earth, not suffered to bury them. So the two
 Witnesses, *Rev. xi.* not suffered to be put into Graves. *St. Augustine* removes this
 scruple, and tells us, *David's* words are no aggravations of the Saints misery, but
 an exaggeration of the Enemies barbarous and inhumane cruelty.

They can do no more, 'tis true, but they would do more, even destroy Body and
 Soul too. Such kind of cruelty hath been seen in the world. They would not have
 those whom they have destroyed, to be accounted Christians, or that they dyed
 in peace with God. Thus the Pope's Curse must sink men into Hell. And hath there
 not been Books writ ten to confute the pious departure of some persecuted men, and
 to dispute them into Hell? A malice beyond the malice of Satan. He scrambled *Luther;*
 for the dead body of *Moses*, but knew his soul was out of his reach. Here is our *Calvin;*
 comfort, *The Souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,* as the Wise-man speaks. *Job*
comforts himself with this meditation, There the wicked cease from troubling, and there
the weary are at rest, there they hear not the voice of the Oppressor, Chap. iii. 17. *Beza.*



The Second

S E R M O N

On LUKE xii. 5.

But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed,
hath power to cast into Hell, yea, I say unto you, Fear him.



WE have done with the negative part of this admonition, which shews
 us whom we should not fear.

Now let us proceed,

Secondly, to the *positive* part, the *affirmative admonition*, that
 which enjoyns a due, and useful, and necessary fear. That's in these
 words, *Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell.*

And this admonition comes not in solitary, or alone; but it is ushered in, and recom-
 mended to us by this solemn and serious Preface, *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall*
fear. And these words are not words of course, serving only to bring in the admoniti-
 on with more formality; but 'tis a serious and ponderous Speech. And we may con-
 ceive the purpose of it in a threefold notion.

T t 2

First,

Serm. II. First, Conceive the purpose of this Speech, *But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear*, as a just exception from the former rule, and necessary limitation of our Saviours admonition. In that Christ forbids us the fearing of those that may hurt and annoy us, there he exempts us from the fear of man: but then withal he enjoins us another fear; he doth not prohibit all kind of fear, nor would have us extinguish that passion and affection in us, but he doth rectifie our fear, teaches us to place it upon the true and proper Object. Be of good courage, fear not men; but then withal take this proviso, be sure that your fear be still fixed, and fastened upon God.

In general, those affections that are in our souls of love and hatred, of joy and sorrow, of courage and fear, they are not (as some would conceive them) an After-growth of noysome weeds in our corrupted nature: but as wholesome herbs implanted in us by God at our first creation; and so do now stand in need of a sober reformation, not of an utter extirpation and rooting up. Religion doth not nullifie, but sanctifie our affections, places them upon their proper objects, reduces them to their due and fit moderation, gives us rules and cautions for the holy and religious exercise of them. It doth not forbid, but rectifies our joy; it bids us not rejoyce in iniquity, but rejoyce in the truth, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. It rectifies our love; *Love not the world, or the things of the world, but let the love of God rule in our hearts.* So here it guides and orders our fear; not the malice of men, but be sure to fear and tremble at the displeasure of God. Empty thy heart of the fear of men; but replinish thine heart with the fear of God. 'Tis the mark of a good man: *The fear of the Lord is his treasure*, Isa. xxxiii. 6.

We are not to live in a fearless and careless condition. Religion frees us from the fear of our enemies; but doth not discharge us from the fear of God. *Christus ablato timore, subiecit timorem*, saith *Augustine*: He forbids us one fear, but enjoins another. We must not so cast away fearfulness, as to fall into prophaneness; like him in the Gospel, that professed, *He neither feared God, nor regarded man.*

This holy fear, 'tis a great preservative of the soul from spiritual dangers. We are *tuti, si cauti; securi, si attoniti*, saith *Tertullian*: Fear makes us circumspect, and so brings safety to us. Which made the good Father pray to God to awe him with fear, *that fearing thy threatnings, I may escape them.* That's the first notion of this Preface, 'tis a just and necessary limitation.

Secondly, This speech, *I will forewarn you whom you shall fear*, hath the use and force of Direction, teaching us whom we should fear and stand in awe of. And such a guidance, 'tis exceeding necessary. We all stand in need of such direction. Naturally we are prone to imagine many umbrages, and false fears to our selves; but ignorant we are, how, and upon whom to place our fear aright. As 'tis said of *Laban*, he had his many Deities by whom he sware, some right, some wrong; but *Jacob* sware by the fear of his Father *Isaac*: so our hearts mislead us often to false objects of fear, which can neither do good nor ill, neither help nor hurt us. We stand in need of a Guide in this duty. We come into the World as those Strangers that came to people *Samaria*; it is said, *They knew not the way of the true God, they must have some to teach them how they should fear the Lord*, 2 Kings xvii. 28. It is *David's* description of wicked men, *They are often afraid, where no fear is.* And so, on the contrary, they are regardless and fearless of him, whom they should dread and tremble at. *God is not in all their thoughts.* As *John Baptist* spake to the People that came to his Baptism, *Quis monstravit, Who hath shewed you to fear, and flee from the wrath to come?* Of our selves we know not which way to bestir our selves; we had need turn Disciples to *David*, *Come ye Children*, saith he, *hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* We all stand in need of the Prophet *Isaiah's* direction, Chap. viii. 12. *Fear not their fear, nor be afraid; but let the Lord be your fear, and let him be your dread.* What *Paul* prays for our loving of God, we may well pray for his fear; *The Lord direct your hearts into the fear of God*, he teach you to fear his Name, and to tremble at it. That's the second, 'tis a speech of Direction.

Thirdly, This Speech hath another Emphasis in it. 'Tis not only a Caution, but a Precaution;

Precaution; not only a warning but a forewarning; *and scizō, præmonstrabo*. 'Tis a seasonable warning beforehand, and that's (if we have grace to make use of it) the best warning. Not like *Dalilah's* warning to *Sampson*, first let him be in the midst of dangers, surpris'd by his foes, and then cry out, and bid him beware, his enemies are upon him. No, that's faithful counsel, to bid us take heed while the danger is yet at a distance, and we have time to prevent it, and secure our selves against it. It is our Saviour's good counsel, *Mat. v. 25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way, ere the Serjeants arrest thee, and the Judge condemn thee, and thou be cast into Prison.* Sue for conditions of peace while thine enemy that comes against thee is a great way off.

This forecast and foresight of dangers is the greatest wisdom, especially in such dangers as are aforehand avoidable, but being once fallen into, are then irrecoverable, as this is in the Text. Whilest thou art on this side Hell, if thou wilt take warning and look about thee now, thou mayest escape it: but when Hell hath laid hold on thee, redemption from thence is impossible, it seizes for ever.

Oh! It is good to make timely use of these forewarnings of Christ, not to neglect them. How earnestly doth God commend this forecast and wisdom to us? *Deut. xxxii. 29. Oh! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* 'Tis that which the Scripture highly commends in *Noah*, *Heb. xi. 7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark for the saving his house.* Had he staid till the flood broke in upon the world, there had been no escaping. God graciously gave him warning, and *Noah* wisely took warning, and so escaped destruction. The slighting and overslipping of these preventing warnings is a shrew'd sign, a dismal forerunner of destruction. See how heavy a doom the Prophet pass'd upon the King of *Judah* for slighting his warning; *I know God hath determined thy destruction, because thou hast not hearkened to my counsel,* *2 Chron. xxv. 16.*

Such gracious forewarnings, if they be despised, make our sins inexcusable, our punishments most heavy and unsupportable. 'Tis a cutting Speech that *St. Paul* uses to convince the Jews of their obstinacy, *Rom. x. I demand, saith he, have they not heard?* And again, *Did not Israel know?* Yes, all day long I stretched out my hands to them, and they would not take warning. Such cannot take up the Speech of those Cast-aways, *Lord, when did we hear thee give us warning?* Thus God aggravates the sins of the Jews, *Jer. xlv. 4. I sent unto you all my servants the Prophets, rising early, and sending them, saying; O, do not this abominable thing which I hate.* The neglect of these forewarnings wrung tears from Christ over *Jerusalem*, *Luke xix. 41. He wept over the City, and said, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* And as it made him weep in compassion, so it shall make him laugh hereafter at their destruction, *Prov. i. 24. Because I called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes.*

You have seen the Preface; *I will forewarn you whom you shall fear.* Come we now to the Admonition it self, whom we should fear, that's in these words, *Fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell.*

And here, first take the words together, and then observe in general; we have not here a bare designation of the person, but here is a solemn and awful description of him whom we should fear. The Text runs not thus, *Fear God*, but it brings him in with this dreadful representation of him, *Fear him that hath power to kill, and to cast into Hell.* Indeed, were we such as we should be, the very naming of God would be sufficient to strike us with fear. And the Scripture sometimes calls upon us to fear him, by the naming him to us. *Fear God, and keep his Commandments,* saith *Solomon*. There is motive enough in that name, to make us to fear him. As *Moses* speaks, *Thou shalt fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God,* *Deut. xxviii. 58.* But yet partly to rouse our dulness and stupidity, partly to over-master our prophaneness, we are grown too familiar and bold with the Name of God, it works not upon us; and partly to fetch us off from the fear of men, and mischief from

Serm. II. from them; see our Saviour sets forth God with terms of Terroure and Majesty, *Fear him that can kill, and cast into Hell.*

Thus Saint *John* in the Revelation represents Christ attended with judgments. He brings in Christ, *riding on a white horse conquering, and to conquer.* After him comes the representation of War and bloodshed, on a red Horse. Then follows Death on a pale Horse, and then Hell follows after him. Oh! 'tis good to represent God to our thoughts, as cloathed with terroure and Majesty, especially in case of temptation to sin. O then let his terroure make thee afraid. Every one hath not the grace to say with *Joseph*, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and so sin against God?* The love of God is not so powerful in every mans heart. Well, if love will not do it, let his dread restrain thee. *Fac, fac, vel timore pœnæ, si non potes facere amore justitiæ*, saith *Augustine*. If Piety to God do not dissuade thee, yet let pity to thine own soul, not to plunge it into perdition, let that deterre thee. I say 'tis good to nourish this fear of him in our hearts, to look up to God with consideration of those dreadful attributes that may keep us in awe; and then say to thy soul, as *Paul* speaks, *shall I provoke the Lord to anger? Am I stronger than he?* 1 Cor. x. 22. Look upon Christ as St. *John* describes him, *holding the Keys of Death and Hell in his hand*; as the Heathens described their *Jupiter*, holding in his hand a Thunderbolt. See how the Prophet *Nabum* describes him, and tremble at him, Chap. i. 20. *God is gracious, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, he reserves wrath for his enemies.* Thus *Job* awes his heart with the meditation of God's greatness; *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, who hath hardened his heart against him, and prospered?* Chap. ix. 4.

We have seen the representation the Text makes of God in the general. Let us take it now asunder into the particulars of which it consists; *Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell.*

And here take notice of three things;

First, His Singularity, *Fear him.*

Secondly, His Authority, *He hath power.*

Thirdly, His Severity, *After he hath killed he can cast into Hell.*

And these three are placed and set in opposition to the fear of men.

I. *Fear them not*, that is in the Plural. Let them be as mad as they will, here is one to be feared above them all.

II. *Fear not them that do kill*, or as St. *Matthew* expresses it, *οἱ θυνάμεινοι*, that are able to kill; but here is not only a *θυναμειν*, in God, strength, and ability, but the Text hath a fuller word, 'tis *ἐξουσία*, he hath power and authority to do it.

III. *Fear not them that kill the Body*, and that's the utmost that they can do; but fear him that can both kill here, and damn hereafter, and cast into Hell; that's the severity.

First, take notice of the singularity of the person, *fear Him.* And this calls off the many distractions of our fear, and reduces them all to one head, fixes our fear upon Him onely who is truly to be feared. A wicked man that is unacquainted with God, and his holy fear, is subject to many noysom fears and perplexities, and may cry out with *Cain*, *Every one that meets me will kill me.* But he that fixes his fear upon God, needs fear no other fear. God checks these distractions of heart in his People, *Of whom hast thou been afraid, or feared, that thou hast not remembered me?* Isai. lvii. 11. *There is one Law-giver*, saith St. *James*, *that is able to save or destroy*, Chap. iv. 12. We stand or fall to him onely. Be sure not to provoke Him, and trouble not thy self with any other fear. 'Tis the benefit which Christianity and Religion affords us, if it be true settled in our hearts, that it frees us from the many anxieties and perplexities that naturally we are subject to, and reduces all our fears to this one, to fear our God. There is in us naturally a *δυσδυσμολία*, many superstitious fears, that do haunt us, many Dreams of vain fears that do disquiet us; but *Solomon* shews us the cure of them, when he saith, *but fear thou God*, Eccl. v. 7. The fear of him is a Sovereign antidote against all other fears that may perplex us. You know what *Abimelech* said to the men of *Sechem*, Judg. ix. *Whether is it better to submit your selves to threescore and ten persons, or that one reign over you?*

Much

Much more may we say, Whether is it better to suffer the distractions of so many fears as flesh and blood will minister to us, or to place our fear upon our God, that he may rule over us. *Serm. II.*

That's the first thing considerable, the singularity of the person, not *them*, but *him*.

Secondly, Take notice of another inducement to fear Him, that's his Power and Authority that he hath over us to afflict and punish us.

First, Those others whom we are forbidden to fear, may most-what be such as have no right over us to hurt and afflict us. Saint *Matthew* calls them *οἱ δυναμαιοι*, men of strength, and force, and violence. Such as the *Danites* were, and their threatenings of *Micah*, *Take heed lest angry men from amongst us run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thine household*: Free-booters they were, and did all by force, *Judg.* xviii. 25. Such that have no other Authority to hurt, than that which *Laban* boasted of to *Jacob*, *Gen.* xxxi. 29. *'Tis in the power of mine hand to do you hurt*. Such also the Prophet *Micah* complains of, *Chap.* ii. 1. *They practise mischief, because it is in the power of their hand*. Like *Nimrod* and his Companions, that filled the earth with violence; *Gen.* vi. 11. I, but God hath not only *δυναμις*, strength and ability, but the Text tells us he hath *ἐξουσια*, just and lawful Power and Authority. And so not only necessity but duty requires us to fear him. *David* tells us, *He ought to be feared*, *Psal.* lxxvi. 2. And even of those that ought not to fear any other Princes and Potentates, whom all other tremble at, must tremble at him; *He cuts off the Spirit of Princes, and is terrible to the Kings of the Earth*, *Verf.* 12. The Book of *Job* acknowledges this power of God, *Chap.* xxv. 2. *Dominion and fear are with him*. *Jus* and *Vis*, Right and Might too. He can destroy us, and He hath Authority to destroy us.

Secondly, Other men may afflict the Innocent, but the Judge of all the World will do right, saith *Abraham*. The King's Power loveth Righteousness, saith *David*; He executeth Judgment and Righteousness, *Psal.* xcix. *We are sure* (saith *St. Paul*) *that the Judgment of God is according to Truth*, *Rom.* ii. 2. When he punishes, there is both *meritum criminis*, & *ordo potestatis*, as *August.* speaks; He hath Authority to inflict it, and we deserve to suffer it.

O, then fear Him that ought to be feared! The apprehension of this infinite power of God, in punishing or rewarding, will make us slight all the fears and hopes of the World. *Exhorresce quod minatur Omnipotens; ama quod promittit Omnipotens, ut vilescet mundus sive promittens, sive terrens*, *Aug.*

Thirdly, Here is yet a third inducement to make us take off our fear from men, and to settle it upon God, and that is the severity of God; the great mischief we incur by offending of him, *He can kill*, and more than that, *He can cast into Hell*.

Here is both the bodily, and the spiritual punishment, both temporal and eternal destruction, both Rods and Scorpions; *He can kill the body*, and then damn both body and Soul, and cast them into Hell.

First, Here is the bodily death, and 'tis represented not by Our dying, but by His killing of us; that is, not only he can take us away by the course of Nature, *if he gather up our breath, we are gone presently*; but he is able to cut off our lives by a Judgment, by an untimely death, by an unnatural death, by an accursed death. He hath infinite ways to destroy our lives, and to cut us off from the Land of the Living by extraordinary Judgments. And such a death is most uncomfortable. Thus 'tis said of *Er*, the first-born of *Judah*, *That he was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him*, took him away by some heavy judgment, *1 Chron.* ii. 3. And so 'tis said of *Saul*, *that for his sin in seeking to a Witch, therefore the Lord slew him*, *1 Chron.* x. 14. And so *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, 'tis said, *they were wicked, and the Lord would slay them*.

The Text means such a death as *Moses* threatened to those Rebels, *Mumb.* xvi. *That they should not die the common death of all men*; but the Lord will make a new thing, and swallow them up by some remarkable judgment. Oh! that's dreadful to dye by the hand of the Lord: As is the man, so is his strength. The killing by man is nothing to the cutting off by God's hand; that embitters death, and makes it dreadful. That's one degree above the mischief that comes by men. Men may kill us, and yet it may be well 'twixt God and us; but when God kills us, when he becomes our enemy and slays us, that's an heavy and dreadful Judgment, there is the bitterness of death in such a destruction. *Secondly*,

Serm. II. Secondly, But then secondly, after he hath killed, he hath more vengeance in store for us, *He can cast into Hell.* When men have killed, they have done their worst, we know they have no more to do: but what saith *David*? *Lord, who knows the power of thine anger?* Psal. xc. 11. 'Tis unconceivable, *Who can stand before his indignation?* And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? Nah. i. 6. What the Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of the joys of Heaven, is most true of the pains of Hell: *Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man,* what are those heavy things which God hath prepared for them that fear him not. No, God's temporal Judgments are but the beginnings of sorrows; are but like the whippings and scourgings before the Crucifying: they are but *καὶ οὐδ' ἐργαζόμενοι τρεβούμενοι, ὥστε ὁ πῦρ καταφλέγόμενον, ἐδ' ἄνθρωπος ἀναπτόμενος.* Nazian. Orat. 15. The anger of the Lord shall smoke against them, saith *Moses.* Temporal Judgments are but the smoke of his anger; but in Hell there are the flames of his anger; that fire burns fiercely, and there is no quenching of it. In compare with this, all outward sufferings are not to be esteemed. Take the ashes of the Furnace, saith God to *Moses,* and cast them into the Air, and they shall be sores and plagues upon them. Such are all Temporal Punishments, they are but the ashes of the Furnace of Hell fire; not to be compared with those everlasting torments. The *Sodomites* had a dreadful overthrow in this world, but that's not all, God hath other judgments in store for them: our Saviour assures us of it, it shall be so and so with the Land of *Sodom* at the day of Judgment. Besides that dreadful overthrow, St. *Jude* tells us those Cities suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude vii.

So then lay all these together,

1. Men and God; and which think you is the stronger and more powerful?
 2. To be killed by Men, or slain by God?
 3. A temporal death, or eternal damnation; which of these are more to be feared?
- 'Tis Saint *Hierom's* Speech, "If men can do more for us than God, let's obey men rather than God. So says the Text, if men can do more against us than God can do, let's fear them rather than God. But that we are sure they cannot, and therefore fear not man, but tremble at God. And that brings in,

Thirdly, The last particular of the Text, the seconding and ratifying of Christ's words in this ingemination; *Tea, I say unto you, fear him.*

Tea, I say unto you, fear him.

And this redoubling of the speech adds a great enforcement to the admonition. 'Tis like the last stroke of the hammer that rivets and drives up all to the head; 'tis like that speech of our Saviour, at the end of his Sermons, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,* or like that in St. *Luke,* *Let this saying sink down into your ears.* God speaks once, yea twice, to open the ears of men, and to seal their instruction, Job xxxiii. 14, 16. Thus *David* uses this ingemination; *Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy fight when thou art angry?* Psal. lxxvi. 7.

And 'tis worth the observing, that this ingemination, and re-inforcement here annexed, is to the Affirmative clause, not to the Negative. Our Saviour saith not, *Tea, I say unto you, fear not them;* but he places the reduplication upon the affirmative Precept, *I say unto you, Fear him.* And great reason there is for this way of expression. He saith not again, *Fear not them;* but this he saith, *Fear him.*

There is,

- I. Greater Duty.
- II. Greater Difficulty.
- III. Greater Danger, if we do not fear him.
- I. Greater Duty that obliges us.
- II. Greater Difficulty to perform it.
- III. Greater Danger to neglect it.

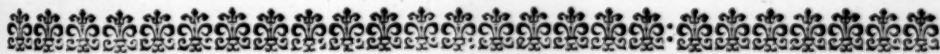
I. I say there is greater duty that binds us to the fear of God. In this case, when the question comes, whom we should rather fear? St. *Augustine's* rule is a good and safe direction, *Non debet minor potestas irasci, si major praelata sit.* Fear him most that hath the greatest power to rule and command us. Should some under-officer enjoy one thing, and the Sovereign power require another, whom wouldst thou fear most,

most, lest thou shouldst offend him? Sure the Supreme is more to be dreaded, than any Subordinate. Thou owest more duty to the King, than to a petty Constable; more to God, than to any Creature. *Serm. II.*

II. As there is more duty, so there is more difficulty in attaining to this fear of God, than in not fearing of men. Some natural humane courage and confidence may make us set light by the fear of men; *Multi nimia superbiâ nihil timent.* An haughty spirit can scorn the threatnings that come from men. Thus David describes a presumptuous man; *God is not in all his thoughts, and therefore he puffs at all his enemies.* But 'tis a work of grace, a spiritual and supernatural work, to stand in fear of God; To keep our hearts in that holy frame, as to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long, as Solomon speaks. God must put his fear into our hearts, as the Prophet speaks, or we cannot fear him.

He must be a man of a rare temper, whose heart despises all other fears, and yet can quake and tremble at the threatnings of God. Such an one was David. A King he was, and so had no superiour whom he might fear; but yet he cries out to God, *Psal. cxix. My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgment.*

III. And then there is greater danger to be feared from God in this case, than can be expected from men. And where there is greater danger, there 'tis fit there should be the greatest dread. *Fear not them that can kill the body; but fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.* The hurts that can come from men, are καὶ ἀνθρώπων according to men; but Hell and damnation, that is ἑσπερας δαίμονος, beyond the courage and strength of man to undergo and endure. Men may seem valiant and courageous in suffering a temporal death, *sed æternis ignibus concremari, nec erit, nec vocabitur fortitudo.* To suffer the pains of Hell, 'tis above strength, exceeding the ability of any to endure them. 'Tis a fearful thing, saith St. Paul, to fall into the hands of the living God. It must answer for us against all the sinful injunctions and fearful threatnings and comminations of men. *Da veniam, Imperator,* saith the Father, *tu carcerem comminaris; Deus autem comminatur Gehennam;* "Excuse me, O Emperour, thou threatnest bonds and imprisonments, but God's threatnings are much more terrible, he threatens Hell-torments and everlasting damnation."

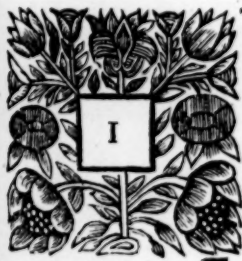


A

S E R M O N

On MARK iii. 5.

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, &c.



IT is a true Rule and Maxim in Divinity, That *Sins against the Gospel are most heinous and of greatest provocation.* When God makes offer of the greatest mercy, there disobedience and contempt doth enkindle in him the greatest fury. As the sweetest and strongest Wine makes the sowrest and sharpest Vinegar; so the choicest favours, if they be despised, provoke in God the greatest displeasure.

Now the main sin against the Gospel and grace of God, is obstinate impenitency and unbelief; When we repel and put off from us the offers of God's grace. And the root of that, is the spirit of obduration, and hardness of heart, when our hearts stand it out with God, and will not

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Serm. I. give way to the work of his grace. And this evil, more or less, in some degree or other, is in all men naturally; and this is that which our Saviour here discovers and reproves in his present Auditors. He observes in them a dead, nay, an hard heart, a rebellious and gain-saying spirit; *He looked round about on them, saw none of them free from this evil, they were all possessed with hardness of heart.*

So then, in the words, which I have read unto you, we may observe these three Particulars.

First, Is the *Jews* sinful and graceless disposition, that's said here to be *hardness of heart.*

Secondly, Is our Saviour's observing and discovery of it; He sees it in them, and takes notice of it.

Thirdly, Is the affection it stirred up in Christ. And here is a double affection:

First, The first is the affection of Anger, and just Indignation; *He looked round about on them with anger.*

Secondly, The second is the affection of Grief, and Pity, and much Commiseration; *He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts.*

First, Let us consider their sinful and graceless disposition, they were all overgrown with *hardness of heart.* And for the better understanding of this, we will take of it a double view.

First, Let's look upon the parties affected with this great evil; who were they?

Secondly, Let's look upon the distemper and malady, they lie under.

First, For the parties that are thus affected with *hardness of heart*; They offer themselves to us in a threefold notion.

I. Let's consider them, as men in the state of nature.

II. We will consider them, as men living under the Doctrine and Discipline of the Law.

III. We will consider them, as men, that in point of outward profession, made a great shew of Religion and Devotion. And so these three Considerations of the persons will afford us a threefold Observation.

I. Look upon them, as men in the state of nature, and then the Observation is thus much, *That naturally every mans heart is full of hardness and obstinacy.* An obdurate and stubborn spirit possesses every man. Indeed, were we such, as God at first made us, we should be free from this wicked and woful distemper. God created us in a far different condition; our Spirits were tender; our Hearts, hearts of flesh; the whole frame and disposition of our Souls, pliant and yielding to every good motion. Had we continued in our original innocency, there should have been no word of God, but we would have believed it; no promise of God, but we would have embraced it; no Commandment of God, but we would have obeyed it; no Threatning from God, but we would have feared it; no Work of God but we would have admired it; no Appearance of God, but we would have adored it; no Blessing of God, but we would have rejoiced in it; no Judgment from God, but we would have trembled at it. But now, as sin hath depraved and corrupted us, our hearts are not stirred or affected with any of these. *Quid est tor durum?* saith St. Bernard; *What is an hard heart?* See how he describes it, and trembles at it, *quod nec compunctione scinditur*, it feels no compunction, *nec pietate mollitur*, favour doth not soften it; *non movetur precibus*, regards no entreaties, *non cedit minis*, is not stirred with threatnings, *flagellis duratur*, it is hardened with corrections.

Doth God appear to us? we take no notice of Him: Doth He send his Word to us? We give no credit to it, it seems a Fable to us: Doth he command us? We will not obey Him: Doth He promise us? We will not be perswaded: Doth he threaten us? We slight and contemn it. An hard heart is like a Brazen wall, shoot never so many Arrows against it, it beats them all back again, they cannot enter: Such is an hard heart; neither God's Word nor his Works, neither Judgments nor Mercies, can enter into it to make any impression.

See how the Scripture describes and sets forth this *hardness of heart*, Ezek. xi. 19. There 'tis called a *stony heart*; *I will take the stony heart out of their flesh.* Every
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mans heart naturally, is a very flint, as hard as a Rock, nay, harder than flint, Zech. vii. 12. *They have made their hearts as an Adamant, lest they should hear the Law.* An Adamant is of all stones the hardest, no strength can soften it. And, as here a sinner is compared to the hardest stones: so elsewhere the Scripture resembles him to the hardest metals, Jer. vi. 28. *They are all grievous Revolters, they are all Brass and Iron.* Thus *Isaiah* describes the obstinate Jews, Chap. xlviii. 4. *I know that thou art obstinate, thy Neck is as an Iron sinew, and thy brow brass.* Here is the condition of every natural man: two conditions of sinning expressed;

1. Obstinacy.

2. Impudency.

1. Obstinacy; *Thy Neck is Iron*, not yielding to the yoke of due obedience.

2. Impudency; *Thy brow brass*, bold, and shameless, and impudent, never blushing at his impiety.

This is the condition not of some notorious, outrageous sinners only; but every man, by nature, is a very stone and rock of Adamant. We may use the words of *Isaiah*, even in this sense also, *Look unto the Rock, whence you were hewn*, Chap. li. 1. We are all not only *dead in trespasses and sins*, but *buried in a Sepulchre hewn out of the Rock*. As they say of the disease of the Stone, 'tis oftentimes hereditary; some Children have drawn it from their Parents, and been born with it: so this *stone in the heart*, 'tis an original evil, we are born in *hardness of heart*; 'tis our natural temper.

Indeed, for natural and humane affections, we have flesh and tenderness. Self-love, 'tis quick of feeling, and so Parents have their bowels to the fruit of their body; and, in point of humanity to others, in misery, all are not hard hearted; some are tender and pitiful: But in matters of God, and Spiritual Duties, for the entertainments of Grace, and the work of Conversion, no Stone, no Adamant, exceeds us in hardness. That's the first Consideration of them, as men in the state of nature.

II. Look upon these men in the Text, as men living under the Law. These men, whom the Text speaks of, were not wild men and Savages, but civil and orderly: Yea, more than so, for their outward state, members of the visible Church, acquainted with the Doctrine and Discipline of *Moses*; they had the Circumcision of the flesh, instructed in the Law, and yet how doth Christ find them? Nothing changed or altered, not mollified or made tender; but dull, dead-hearted sinners for all that. See the state of the Jews, Jer. ix. 26. *All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their hearts.*

Observe it, 'Tis not in the power of the Law to alter or change us, to soften and mollify our hard hearts; that work belongs to Christ and his Gospel, to his Grace and Spirit. We see this work restrained to the new Covenant, 'tis proper to the Gospel, Jer. xxxi. 31. *I will make a new Covenant with them, I will put my Law into their hearts, and write it in their inward parts.* They had the Law written in Tables of Stone, not on the Fleishly Tables of their hearts. The Old Covenant had no power or efficacy to work upon the inward man. The Law teaches us, but the Gospel enables us; that gives and works in us, what the Law requires of us. *The Law came by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. The Law hath power of conviction, but 'tis the Gospel only hath a power of Conversion. The Law, that's the hammer that knocks at the door of our hearts; but the Gospel, that's the Key that opens it, puts back the bar of Obduration, and lets in Grace and the Spirit into it.

See the truth of this in two instances:

1. *Nicodemus*, a great Doctor of the Law, a chief Rabbi amongst the Jews; yet, when Christ tells him of the necessity of Regeneration, he must be *born again*, get a new heart, he wondred at his Doctrine, knew not what it meant, conceived it impossible, John iii. 4. *How can a man be born again?* So,

2. Saint *Paul* before his Conversion, was an exact Pharisee, for all points of the Law without exception, beyond the reach of any man's reproof. Yet how hard was his heart, till the Grace of Christ seized upon him, subdued and softened him! No,

Serm. I. the Law made nothing perfect. The Blood of Bulls could not cleanse the Conscience. The Circumcision of the Heart, 'tis from the Spirit. That's the second Consideration. Men living under the Law, yet hard.

III. These men came under a third Consideration; they were very forward in outward Devotion, great Zealots for the Law; no common men, but of the first and forwardest rank; such as the world would call zealous Professours, frequenters of the Synagogues, great Sabbatarians, wonderful scrupulous, lest Christ should prophane the Sabbath day, *Verse 2.* and yet see, under all this out-side of Holiness and seeming Sanctity, Christ espies a dead, hard, wicked heart lurking; they are all of them men of hard hearts.

Observe, *Seeming and out-side Sanctity may go together, and consist with inward and spiritual hardness and obstinacy.* A man may be very forward in outward acts and appearances of Piety, and yet his heart may be dead to all spiritual goodness, hardened and obdurate in all impiety. 'Tis the true constitution of an Hypocrite, he is all for the out-side of Religion, there he is excellent; he will outgo and exceed all others in shew; but look upon his heart, he wholly neglects it, that is full of hardness and stubborn impiety.

Christ compares such to Tombs and Sepulchres in Churches. Of all places in a Church, a Tomb is the fairest, and most beautiful, painted, and carved, and adorned; but within, 'tis the most noysome and loathsome, there is nothing within but rottenness and corruption: So look upon the out-side of an Hypocrite, he is the seemliest Christian in the Church, he hath the most spacious out-side, but what is his heart? that's dead and obdurate. Saint Paul describes them *ἐν προσώπῳ καλῷ*, they set a good face on it, they make a fair shew, *Gal. vi. 12.* So their facing be good, it is no matter for their lining, though that be ragged and rotten. This dress of an Hypocrite,

1. 'Tis the easiest work. Outside work is a great deal more easie. Outward Observances in matter of Religion, they cost but little pains; but to work upon the heart, and to bring that in order, that's painful and laborious. As in the practice of Physick or Chirurgery, it is more easie to cure an outward hurt of the body, that is ill-affected or wounded; but an inward distemper, when a vein is broken, and it bleeds inward, the curing of this is a great deal more difficult. The outward Circumcision of the flesh was nothing, to the inward Circumcision of the heart. So Saint Paul tells us, *Rom. ii. 28.* He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of Men, but of God. The outward, that may be praised of Men, and that's all the Hypocrite looks for. To look like a Christian, is all he cares for.

2. 'Tis natural for Hypocrisie to leave the heart in hardness; because it employs all its care in dressing, and trimming, and adorning the out-side. Christ compares an Hypocrite to a piece of fluttishness; it will wash the out-side of the Dish, never cleanse the in-side. As those Distempers that send all the heat of the body outward, and cause great flushings in the face, they hinder the inward concoction, cool, and dead the Stomack and vital parts, that they cannot perform their Functions: So Hypocrisie sends out all the heat of their Piety to the out-side, causes great flushings of Piety in the outward man; but chills, and cools, and deadens the life of Religion in the heart. It will be careful for outward observance, but yet within harbour all impiety. See an instance of this in the Jewish Priests, about the condemning of Christ. They can plot and contrive the murdering of our Saviour, they make no conscience of that, but yet how precise were they in their outward observances! They would not enter into the Judgment-Hall for fear of incurring an irregularity, lest they should be defiled: O, they must provide to keep the Sabbath; for that Sabbath was a great Sabbath. They can be Murderers, but by no means they will be Sabbath-breakers. So again, they can give money to Judas to betray Christ; but yet when Judas out of horror of conscience brings back the money, O, they would not put it into the Treasury, 'twas the price of Blood. How great an outward formality, and how damnable their inward

inward obstinacy! And the like we find here in Christ's Auditors. O, very tender of the Sabbath, *They watched him if he would cure on the Sabbath day*, Verse 2. but how blind are they in their malice against him! *They consult and take counsel how they may destroy him*, Verse 6. Serm. I.

We have the Parties; now,

Secondly, Let us consider their sinful disposition; that is said here to be *hardness of heart*. And in it are two things:

I. The subject of this evil disposition, that is the *heart*.

II. The sinful and malicious Quality that resides in it, that is *hardness*.

I. The subject of this evil Quality is the *Heart*. By heart we are not to understand that particular vital member of the body, as in common speech we use to take it, but in the Scripture-Language: so it signifies the Soul and Spirit of a Man. Thus Gen. vi. 5. *God saw that every imagination of mans heart was evil continually*. So again, Jer. xix. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it?* And again, Mat. xv. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries*.

Nor is it here taken only for that leading and commanding faculty of the Soul, the Will of Man; but it signifies the whole Soul and Spirit of man. The whole Soul, and all the Faculties of it, are perverted and hardened, dead and dull to any goodness, froward and obstinate to any good motion, or holy action. As in a disordered Clock, wherein both the Spring and the Wheels are out of frame, it cannot strike one stroke right.

1. The Mind and Understanding, that's over-grown with hardness and blindness. *Præcognitio* signifies both. Indeed 'tis active in matters of inferior natures; but in spiritual things, no stone blinder. As the Eye looking downward sees clearly; but if it look up to the Sun, it is presently dazzled. How untractable is our Understanding to matters of Religion? Able enough we are in other things, but here we are dead, and dull, and most unteachable; Eagle-eyed in worldly things, Mole-eyed in spirituals.

2. Our memories in matters of Religion, how is that dulled and benumbed? how fluid? No retentive power in it for that which is spiritual. You may see this in Christ's Disciples: though they were in part sanctified, they forgot the Miracle of the Loaves, *for their hearts were hardened*, Mark vi. 52. Our Memory, which should be the store-house and treasury of all heavenly Truths, 'tis utterly unable to retain spiritual things. Let the seed of the Word be sown in it; yet the Devil comes and takes it out, that it can have no abiding in us.

3. The Will, of all others, how is that hardened, brawn'd, steeled? when the Understanding is convinced; yet how do our Wills repel, and oppose any Divine Truths? *Prævalat intellectus, & sequitur tardus, vel nullus effectus*, Aug. in Psal. cxviii. Our Wills are possessed with a spirit of contradiction. We may as easily remove Mountains, pierce the Rocks, melt the Flint, as persuade and prevail with an hard obdurate Will.

4. Our affections which are quick and stirring in other matters, how dead and dull are they to spiritual Duties? *We have piped unto you*, saith Christ, *but you have not danced; we have mourned to you; but you have not wept*. Speak to natural men of the joys of Heaven, yet whose heart longs for them? tell them of the pains and torments of Hell, they never tremble at them. Acquaint them with the love of God, it never melts them. Shew them the odiousness of sin, they never loath it. Persuade them of the beauty and loveliness of Piety, they take no delight in it. Thus you see the whole frame of our souls is out of order, a crust of hardness hath over-grown the whole man.

We have seen the subject of this evil Quality, which is the heart and soul of man: Now,

II. Let's consider the quality it self, and that is called *hardness*. Now we must know there is a threefold *hardness of heart*.

I. Is natural and inbred in us, an *hardness of heart* which we all bring with us into the World, which makes us so unteachable and untractable to any good. The very

Serm. I. very *Heathen* Men did discern it, which made them complain, that our Nature was *mater vitiorum, non vera virtutum*; a fruitful Mother and Nurse of Vice, we are exceeding prone to that; but a curst Stepdam to Virtue and Piety, we have no lift or love to that.

2. There is an acquired and a contracted *hardness of heart*, which increases that inbred and natural hardness. When custom in sinning, begets in us a firm resolution, to continue, and persist, and go on in sinning. St. Paul charges this upon customary sinners, *Rom. ii. 5. Thou after thine hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath.* And he forewarns us of it, that we take heed, lest it grow upon us, *Heb. iii. 13. Lest any of you be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin.*

3. There is an hardness inflicted by God, a penal and punishing hardness; when God punishes a wicked man with this spiritual Judgment of an *hard heart*. Such was *Pharaoh's hardness of heart*. God being provoked by our wilful obstinacy, withdraws his Grace, leaves a sinner to himself, suffers *Satan to stand at his right hand.*

1. The first is the *hardness of our natural inclination.*

2. The second is an *hardness of purpose and resolution.*

3. The third is a *penal hardness*, by God's just judgment and desertion. All woful and lamentable; but the Text principally respects the two former.

The inquiry then would be, Wherein doth this *hardness of heart* consist? how shall we discern it? what are the properties and effects of it? Take these four following.

(1.) *Durum non cedit.* Those things that are hard, they are unyielding and impenetrable; whereas that which is soft, will easily admit of any impression. But a stone, touch it, nay offer more force to it, and strike it, there is yet no yielding in it. And such is the condition of an *hard heart*, stubborn and impenetrable. Till this *hardness* be removed by the mighty hand of God, there is no working upon it; it will not give place to any means of grace that God hath appointed, though never so powerful.

1. The Word of God, that's a powerful agent, yet that cannot prevail with an *hard heart*. The Psalmist shews this in that Caveat he gives us, *To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* An hard heart will sit out many a Sermon. And Solomon tells us of such kind of sinners, *Prov. xxix. 1. that though they be often reprov'd, yet will harden their neck.* The Apostle calls them *οὐκ ἀπειθήναι, unperswadable men*, no perswasion can prevail with them.

2. There be many good Motions, which the Spirit of God suggests to a sinner: it inspires, casts some good thoughts into him; but they take no place, they are like sparks falling upon moist things, they do not kindle, but quench presently; Or he turns away his thoughts, from these holy motions to other things, as he that lights up Candles, that he might not see the flashes of lightning, which come from the skies. Such were the men of the old world, *Gen. vi. 3.* The Spirit of God did strive with the men of that Generation; but it was in vain, there came no good of it. And such were the People of Israel, as *Isaiah* complains of them, *Chap. lxiii. 10. They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit,* would not embrace the sweet motion of it.

3. The Mercies of God, they should prevail with us; but an hard heart yields not to them: *Rom. ii. 4. 5. Knowest thou not, that the bounty of God should lead thee to repentance? but thou, after the hardness of thy heart despisest his mercies.* Mercy, that's like an oil to supple and soak into our hearts, to soften and intenerate them; but an hard heart can refuse this sweet impression, the mercies of God cannot prevail with it.

4. The Judgments of God, they are of great power and prevalency. Though Mercy doth not draw us, yet Judgment that should drive us to him. No, an hard heart can despise Judgments, set them at nought. As *Pharaoh* did, he did not *apponere cor*, but *opponere*, set not his heart to regard God's Judgments, but set his heart against them. They were like the strokes of the Hammer upon the Anvil, they made no impression.

2. A second property and effect of an *hard heart*, is *durum non sentit*; that which is hard and brawnie, is void of sense and apprehension. The tenderest flesh, 'tis of quickest

quickest apprehension; but a brawny heart is dull and insensible. S. Paul describes such kind of sinners, *Eph. iv. 19.* He calls them ἀπληγῆτες *past feeling, hard-hearted, and remorseless sinners.* The heart of a good Christian, that's exceeding tender, as it was in good *Josiah, 2 King. xxii.* At the reading of the Law, his heart was tender, like melted wax, fit for any impression, and he humbled himself before the Lord. But *Pharaoh* and *Ahab* how senseless and stupid were they?

Will you see the stupor and lethargie of an *hard heart*? such an heart, no suggestions of Satan, though never so dreadful, affrights them, they startle not at them; no inspirations of God's Spirit doth at all affect them, they perceive them not; the checks of conscience never move them; the guilt of sin doth not dare them or perplex them. They are like *Solomon's Drunkard, Prov. xxiii. 24.* *They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not.*

(3.) Another property of an *hard heart*, is, *durum non flectitur*; That which is hard, is inflexible. A stone may sooner be broken, than bent: and such is the temper of an *hard heart*, no art or endeavour can bow or bend it. *Pharaoh*, how many ways did God use to persuade him, and to bring him to the bent of due obedience! First a Message, then a Miracle, then a Judgment, then a Mercy, then a Threatning; but *Pharaoh* was obstinate against all these endeavours, at last he brake him in pieces, there was no bowing or bending him. Thus God complains of the people of the Jews: *He sent to them, rising early and late, but they still refused.* It makes God give over his more gentle corrections; *Why should you be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more, Isai. i. 5.* See the doom the Prophet passes upon such an inflexible, stubborn Sinner, *2 Chron. xxv. 16.* *I know that God hath determined to destroy thee; because thou hast not hearkened to my counsel.* An *hard heart* will not be bent by persuasion, 'tis therefore fitted and prepared for destruction, *Jer. vi. 29. 30.* *The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the Founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate Silver shall men call them; because the Lord hath rejected them.*

(4.) *Durum repercutit.* There is not only a not yielding in that which is hard; but there is a resistance, a contrary action repelling and driving back any action upon it. Smite a stone, and it will not only not yield; but it enforces the stroke back again. There is a redaction and repercussion in resistance, it will drive back the strength upon him that smote it. *Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur, interdum resistens percutit dirigentem, Hierom. ad Nepot.* And this is the disposition of an *hard heart*, it will resist and oppose it self against any action of God, and strive against it.

There is not only in an *hard heart* a wilful obstinacy, but a violent contumacy against the grace of God: *Non solum averfas, sed adversas voluntates habent peccatores; non tantum nolentes, sed repugnantes.* Thus our Saviour describes such obdurate sinners, He compares them to fierce Dogs and Mastiffs, *Cast not that which is holy unto Dogs, they will not only tread it under their feet, but they will turn again, and offer violence to you, Matth. vii. 6.* St. Stephen charges the hard-hearted Jews with this Contumacy, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:* And then he adds, *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted?* that's the *contrapassum à resistente*; they recoil'd back upon him, that would work upon them. So St. Paul charges the Jews, *Acts xiii. 46.* *It was necessary the word of God should be spoken unto you, but ye put it from you;* as he that thrust *Moses* away, saying, *Who hath made thee a Ruler among us?* How often did the Jews repel the word of God's grace, with Contradictions and Blasphemies, with Violence and Persecutions! As *Isaiah* complains of them, *Chap. lxxv. 2.* *All the day long have I stretch'd forth my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

And this resistance will shew it self in three Particulars:

1. In stiffness and pertinacy, and wilfulness of opinion. Deal with an *hard hearted* man to convince his Judgment, to gain and recover him out of any Error, what obstinacy and pertinacy shall you find? there will be no yielding to any evidence of Truth. They are ignorant, and they will be ignorant. A tender heart is a teachable heart; any word of God shall convince him presently: but an hardened Sinner accounts it a disgrace to be thought to have erred. As the *Heathen* man *Symmachus*, answered

Serm. I. answered the Christians that would have recall'd them for their Idolatry, *Sera, & contumeliosa, est emendatio senectutis*. Go about to reform an old, inveterate Error, you offer such a man disgrace and contumely. You may see this stubbornness of opinion in the High-Priest, *Acts* iv. 16. How wilfully did they shut their eyes against a clear conviction of their former Error? *Here is indeed*, said they, *a notable Miracle wrought by these men* (Peter and John) *manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it*, but yet they will not understand; and seeing, they did see, but not perceive; for their heart was waxed gross.

2. This resistance will appear in obstinate continuance in wicked courses. Say what can be said, an hard, resisting heart will not be reclaim'd. Thus those hard-hearted Jews answered the Prophet *Jeremy* stiffly and peremptory, *The word that thou speakest unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not do it*; we are resolved of our courses, *Chap.* xlv. 16. Let *Elias* threaten *Ahab*, he hath sold himself to do wickedly. Whereas an heart that is softned, answers every call and check that God gives it; as *Paul* did, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* But obstinacy spurs on in spite of all persuasions. *St. Paul* took comfort in this, that his heart yielded to the call of God: *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision*, *Acts* xxvi. 19. *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue*, *Job* vi 24.

3. This resistance will appear in quarrelling and cavilling at any evidence of Truth, if it makes against us; it will not suffer us to yield to the obedience of Faith, or captivate our selves to Divine Truth, but will exalt it self against the knowledge of God. *Tela à duco resiliunt, cum dolore cadentis solida feriuntur*, *Sen.* *S. Paul* tells us of *ὀχυρώματα*, of strong holds and intrenchments, in which an hard heart will persist. See this cavilling humour in the obdurate Jews, when Christ was amongst them. When Christ reforms the Temple, and that in a wonderfull manner (*St. Hierome* accounts it the greatest Miracle that ever Christ performed) then they quarrelled and cavilled, *By what authority doest thou these things?* When he preached forgiveness of sins, *O, then this man blasphemeth*. When he cured the Leper, *This man breaks the Sabbath*. When he cast out Devils, *He doth it by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*. Thus hardness of heart will bark against the Sun, kick against the pricks, weave and contrive cavils against manifest Truth.

Hardness of heart hath still some quarrels and exceptions: *They are contentious, and will not obey the truth*, *Rom.* ii. 8. They will speak ill of the way of the Lord, still raising questions that engender strife. Whereas a soft heart is willing to take satisfaction, glad to have doubts cleared and assoiled, labours to be grounded in the Truth, and established in it, is troubled at scruples, trembles at doubtings and waverings; but abhors cavilling and opposing. Thus the Disciples took satisfaction, *Acts* xi. 18.

For use of all,

First, Is every mans heart by nature thus hard? it gives us the reason why so few men are effectually wrought upon by the means of Grace; why so few are converted. 'Tis more wonder to see any to yield and turn to God. Is it an easie matter, think you, to melt, and mollifie, and soften stones? 'Twas an hard matter in *Moses* his account, to soften the Rock, and to make it yield water; he that had Faith to work all other Miracles, doubted at this. It must satisfie in *Isaiah's* complaint, *Chap.* liii. 1. *Lord, who hath believed our report? all the day long have I stretched out my hands to a gainsaying People*. 'Tis easier to get Oyl out of a Flint, then a good thought out of a stony heart.

'Twas strange that Christ himself converted so few; the Evangelist wonders at it, *John* xii. 37. *Though He had done so many Miracles among them, yet they believed not on Him*. Well, the Evangelist satisfies this wonder, gives the reason of it out of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Therefore they could not believe, because their hearts were hardened*: This also satisfied *St. Paul's* complaint, that so few Jews were converted to Christ; *The Election hath obtained, but the rest are hardened*, *Rom.* xi. 7.

Secondly, Is the heart of man so overgrown with hardness? it shews the reason why the work of Conversion, even where 'tis begun, goes so slowly forward; why such small Progress is made in the work of Grace. We may see the reason of this great slowness. Engravers upon Stone cannot rid much work: they that point and polish

Diamonds,

Diamonds, use much grinding to wear away a little unevenness. The heart of Man, *Serm. 1.* 'tis like Metal, not melted but with much fire and heat, and take it off the fire, it will soon harden of it self. 'Tis so with our hearts; there is much ado to mollifie the heart, there must be much preaching and prayer, great striving to bring it to any good temper; but then disuse these means for a little while, it will harden again presently. Grace in the heart, 'tis not like heat in the fire, but like heat in the water: as long as there is fire under it, so long it retains heat; but take it off the fire, it will soon grow cold again.

Thirdly, is every mans heart over-grown with this callous Obduration?

First, Take heed of increasing it.

Secondly, Use all means for removing it.

First, Take heed of increasing it. As natural Diseases may, by evil ordering of our selves, be further encreased; so may Natural Corruptions. How shall we avoid that?

I. Be careful to avoid, and abstain even from small sins, they may make up this evil of Obduration. As the stone in the Bladder is further increased by small gravel; so even those sins which we account little, practised and accustomed, do naturally engender and encrease our spiritual hardness; *Heb. iii. 13.* A man may be *hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*. Small sins are deceitful sins; they seem not so dangerous as they prove unto us. *Quod minimum est, minimum est, sed ex multis minimis fit malum.* Gravel is but gravel; but a great deal of gravel may cake into a stone. *Ista levia peccata noli contemnere: si contemnis quando appendis, expavesce quando numeras; levia multa faciunt unum grande, multæ guttæ implent flumen, multa grana faciunt messem.* Aug.

II. Especially be careful not to fall into more gross and notorious sins, they have a special force to harden the heart. Such sins waste the Conscience, make havock of Grace, fear the Conscience with an hot Iron. When *David* cut off the Lap of *Saul's* Garment, 'tis said, *his heart smote him*; but when he sinned foully in his Adultery and Murder, 'tis not said then *his heart smote him*; no, it grew hard upon the commission of those heinous sins, till God dispatch'd his Prophet *Nathan* to him, to arouse and awaken him.

III. Would'st thou not increase this hardness of heart? above all take heed of sinning against the light, and evidence, and dictates of Conscience. Even great and gross sins have their alleviations from ignorance, that we have not done them wittingly, when our hearts forbid us. It was *St. Paul's* case, when he had committed an heinous sin in persecuting the Church; *But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly*: his Conscience misled him, he did not overbear and contradict his Conscience. In this case, we destroy our Conscience if we disobey it. *Sæpè fracta surgendo, discit non surgere.* The dictates of Conscience are like *Achitophel's* counsel; reject those counsels, and go against them, and Conscience, like *Achitophel*, destroys it self. When our Conscience says to us, *This is a great sin, commit it not*; and yet, in spite of Conscience, and the checks it gives thee, thou wilt run on, it is just with God to suffer Conscience to strangle and stifle it self, to harden thine heart, and to seal thee up with the spirit of obduration, unto the day of destruction.

And as we must take heed of encreasing the hardness of heart; So

Secondly, We must use all good means to remove it, and to get tender, and feeling, and softned hearts. Wouldest thou be rid of this great evil? Labour to find and feel thine hardness. *Nemo insanabilior eo, qui sibi sanus videtur,* Aug. *Æger si non sentiens, periculosius laborat,* Bern. Diseases unfelt, are unregarded. Some men have the Stone in the Bladder, and yet of a long time they are not troubled with it, and then no marvel if they look not out for help against it. *Hardness of heart* hath that ill property in it, that it hinders feeling of it. As he that is sick of a Lethargie, the more the disease increases, the less he perceives it. *Cor durum seipsum non exhorret, quia nec sentit,* saith *Bernard*. An hard heart is never troubled, because it is not acquainted with its own Malady. Bless not thy self because thy heart condemns thee not. *St. Augustine* saith well, *non omne durum rectum, nec omne stupidum sanum*; a thing may be stiff, and yet not strait; and a man not feel any ail, and yet not be in health. 'Tis a good degree to health, to know our disease, as *Solomon* speaks in his Prayer, *to know the plague of his own heart,*

Serm. I.

And when thou hast found it, and felt it, use these means to remove it.

I. Complain to God, as to the great Physician of thy Soul, who alone is able to cure this malady. Other means may stupifie thee; but God's means alone can cure thee. Thus we see the people of God bemoaned themselves to him for their *hardness of heart*, *Isai. lxi. 17.* O Lord, why are our hearts hardened from thy fear? Put God in mind of his Promise, that *He will take away the stone out of thy heart, and give thee an heart of flesh.* Smite on thy hard heart with the Penitent Publican, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.

II. Then lay thine heart under the dint and stroke of the Word. That Word enlivened by his Spirit, is a mighty instrument to bruise, and soften, and mollifie the heart, *Jer. xxiii. 29.* *Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a Hammer that breaks the Rock in pieces?* His Threatning word, that will break and bruise us; his Promising word, that will soften and melt us. Good *Josiah*, when the Scripture was read to him, his heart melted within him. *Did not our hearts burn within us, saith the two Disciples, when he opened to us the Scriptures?*

III. The daily practice of Repentance is of great force to soften our hearts. Impenitency, that hardens; Repentance, that softens and melts our hearts. A mournful heart will prove a mollified heart. There be two names given to Repentance, which shew the vertue of it to work upon the heart.

1. 'Tis called Compunction, that enters indeed, and goes to the quick.

2. 'Tis called Contrition, that bruises and breaks the *hardness of heart*, and makes capable of any good impressiō. A daily dropping upon a hard stone, will pierce into it, and wear it away: And so the daily distillations of penitential tears, are of great force to wear away this spiritual hardness of an obdurate heart.



A

S E R M O N

ON ECCLESIASTES viii. 11.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.



WE have formerly heard of the great evil of an hard heart; both inbred by our natural corruption, and farther increased by our stubbornness and wilful rebellion in sinning. It will be a profitable enquiry to search into the causes, how so great a prodigie and monster should be in Nature. To see men turned into stones; That the heart of man, which is naturally of the tenderest constitution, should be hardened into so much stiffness and obduration. 'Tis a Miracle in the course of grace, *of stones to raise up children unto Abraham*, *Matth. iii. 9.* And 'tis a great wonder to see a quite contrary change, to see the sons of Adam turned into stones, and to become obstinate and inflexible.

Now the first and chiefeſt cause of it, is in our selves. God indeed, being justly provoked, withdraws his grace, and leaves us to our selves; (*Obdurat, quos non emoluit*; He is said to harden those whom he doth not soften.) And Satan sollicit and tempts our will to be stubborn against God. But neither God nor Satan do really or effectually produce this hardness in us, we breed it in our selves. As ill diet may occasion the Stone in the Bladder; but it is the inward distemper of the body, that immediately

immediately breeds it. We are hard, because we will be hard. 'Tis a disease of the will, and so a wilful disease. *Ligamur vinculis propriæ voluntatis*: The cords of sin with which we are bound, are of our own twisting; we make, and take occasions of hardning our selves. Nay; such is our proneness unto this evil, that those things which in their own nature, and by God's appointment, are useful and helpful to mollifie and soften us, as the mercies of God, the means of grace, the blessed opportunities and hints of conversion, a wicked heart will turn all these into occasions and motives of further hardness.

That's a dangerous and incurable disease, when wholesome Medicines that should work a cure, do further encrease the sickness, and more enrage it; like some kind of fires, the more water you pour upon them the fiercer they burn: the more mercy is offered, the more 'tis despised. *Isaiah* tells us, this is the perverse Disposition of an hard heart, Chap. xxvi. 10. *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, in the Land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord.*

'Tis that which *Solomon* takes notice of in my Text: he tells us God is exceeding patient towards wicked men; as *David* before him, *Psal. vii.* God is strong and patient, and God is provoked every day, yet He forbears to execute His wrath upon sinners. A great mercy not to be presently cut off and destroyed. How doth an hard heart entertain this mercy? What use doth he make of it? Are they won and restrained by it? Oh! no, they are the more hardned, they encourage themselves the more in sinning. *Patientiam Dei commeatum faciunt peccandi*, as the Father speaks. God's patience is turned into an advantage of more ungodliness. Because God forbears them, doth not presently punish them, *therefore their hearts are fully set in them to do evil.*

So then, the Text sets out the great abuse that the sinful world offers to the patience of God. And in it observe these two Particulars.

First, The gracious exercise and practice of God's patience and forbearance; that's in these words, *Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily.*

Secondly, The ungracious and prophane abuse that the world makes of this patience and forbearance of God, they sin the rather for it, they grow more obdurate; *Their hearts are wholly set in them to do evil.*

Come we to the

First, That's the exercise of God's patience and forbearance towards wicked men. For the nature and quality of it, we must know this dealing of God with wicked men, 'tis a mixt Action, a compound of Justice and Mercy. It is not *actus puræ misericordiæ*, it is not all mercy, full perfect mercy that He vouchsafes them: that is the childrens portion. No, he deals with the wicked, not as a merciful Father, but as a mild Judge. It is not *amor summus*, fatherly love He shews to them; but 'tis *moderata ira*, a moderated, and delayed, and a restrained anger. And that will appear in three Particulars, which the Text affords us.

First, Here is *sententia lata*, the Text supposes that, that a Sentence against ungodly men is already passed, and decreed against them. Think, or think not of it, as you please, slight and despise it, as most men do, you will one day find it to be true, that a sad Sentence is passed upon you. That's an Act of Justice, and of God's Severity.

Secondly, Here is *sententia dilata*; this sentence of condemnation is for a time suspended from execution. 'Tis enacted and denounced, the fact is condemned, the punishment determined, the Warrant for execution is already signed; only here is a mixture of mercy: 'Tis yet but a Warrant dormant, not presently executed. We may a little invert *St Peter's* Speech, *Their damnation as yet slumbereth.*

Thirdly, Here is *tractus*, and *mora dilationis*, that's the time and continuance of this forbearance, the lengthening out of this patience of God. The Apostle calls it *μακροθυμία*, his *long-suffering*. 'Tis laid here to be *cum mora*, 'tis not a Reprieve for a few days: There is a gracious pause and delay, that God interposes and sets to it, 'tis not speedily executed.

First, Come we to the first of these, that's *sententia lata*; that's the first Ingredient into this compound and mixture in God's proceedings, that's an act of Justice, a Sentence is passed, and denounced against wicked men. And the Observation

Serm. I. from hence is thus much; *Every wicked man and impenitent sinner, is a man cast in Law, the sentence of death and condemnation is denounced upon him.* They may be forborn; but they are not forgiven: their Sentence may be delayed and suspended; but 'tis not reversed: they may for a time be reprieved; but they are not at all absolved, they are all condemned men. *St. Jude saith, they are ἀπογραμμένοι* Verse 4. Booked and billed up, and their names, and their sins, are enrolled in the Book of Condemnation.

And this dealing of God with wicked men, 'tis very particular; 'tis not in a summary way, or in gross: but 'tis for *every evil work*. Not a sin passes from thee; but God's Eye sees it, and he takes notice of it; and he hath a Book of Remembrance, in which 'tis registred, and a certain doom is passed upon it, and all the circumstances and aggravations of thy sins are distinctly recorded.

We must not conceive, that it fares with wicked men in God's proceedings, as it doth oftentimes with Malefactors here amongst men. A man may commit some great offence, and yet keep himself out of the cognisance and reach of humane Justice. The fact may be unknown, or the party concealed, or the course of Justice stopt, or the Sentence be prevented; but none of these cases are incident in the way of God's proceedings. God hath a standing Court of Judgment; there is no wickedness committed, but 'tis instantly discovered, and *ipso facto*, the Law passes upon it, and a Sentence, 'tis enrolled against it immediately.

For understanding of this Truth, we must know there is a double Sentence against every sin.

I. Is *Sententia Legis*, the Sentence, that the Law denounces.

II. Is *Sententia Judicis*, the Sentence, which the Judge pronounces.

I. Is *Sententia Legis*; that's the very voice of the Law of God, condemning every sin and transgression. Thus 'tis said, that *Moses accused the Jews*, John v. 45. I, and condemned them too. Not the Person of *Moses*; but the Law of *Moses*, that laid hold upon them, that arraigned and condemned them. So likewise the Gospel, that passes a Sentence upon every unbelieving and impenitent sinner. Hear the Sentence, John iii. 36. *He that believes not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Yes, the Gospel hath a curse as well as the Law; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ●●

II. Is *Sententia Judicis*, a Sentence which the Judge passeth upon a Sinner; and that is,

1. The ratifying of that Sentence, which the Law denounces, and the involving of the sinner into that Sentence. *What is bound on Earth is bound in Heaven.*

2. The peremptory and final publishing, and declaring, and inflicting of the Sentence at the Day of Judgment. But the Sentence of the Law, that now passes upon every sinner. The Scripture calls this Sentence the *concluding*, or *shutting up of a sinner*, *συνάγειν*, the word signifies to be *shut up under lock and key*, to be kept in *durance*.

Thus the Sentence against the first sin, 'tis in full force still against every impiety. That's the Original Writ that casts us, and you may see the temper of that, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dye.* Adam was *civiliter mortuus*; dead in Law, at the very instant of the Commission of his first sin. Had he not obtained pardon, he had been still *filius mortis*, doomed to death by just and immediate Sentence. 'Tis so in every sin; the day that thou doest it, thy doom is passed upon thee, thou must die for it. Gods patience may respite the execution; but, without Repentance, the Sentence of Death is in full force, and shall never be reversed. God's Patience and Justice may stand together. Forbearance with God, 'tis no forgiveness. See how the Scripture joyns both these together, Exod. xxxiv. 7. *The Lord is gracious, and long-suffering*; but will by no means clear the guilty. So we have it in the Prophecy of Nahum i. 3. *The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.* Respite them he may, not acquit, or pardon, and absolve them.

Here is all the mercy, that impenitent sinners shall find at God's hand; they may be the Objects of his patience and forbearance; but not of his absolute remission and

and forgiveness. St. Paul puts them together, *Rom. ix. 22.* *He endures with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath, fitted to destruction.* There is suffering, and long-suffering, and much long-suffering; but yet for all that, if they repent not, they are *Vessels of Wrath fitted to destruction.* God gives them a long day; but reckons with them at last. As they say, the King never pardons a Murderer; but grants them a Lease of their life for so many years; the Sentence it is still in force. Thus St. Peter tells us, *They are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished,* and it may be sooner, *2 Pet. ii. 4.* Thus St. Paul tells the Gentiles, *Acts xvii. 30.* That now God winks at their sins; but *he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge them in righteousness.* Cain, after he had murdered his Brother, God suffered him to live; but only as a man reprieved, he went with his Keeper; the Sentence of Death was out against him, and at last was executed. God in this case deals with ungodly men, as David with Joab and Shimei; he would not acquit them, but yet he forbore them; at last, gave order to Solomon to put them both to death. So God may use his patience for a time, suffer thee to live; but hath committed this to his Son, whom he hath made Judge of all, *Let not their heads come in peace to the grave,* put the Sentence of condemnation in full execution.

Serm. I.

The consideration of this Truth will afford a threefold Meditation to be laid to heart.

1. Is this so? is this the condition of wicked men? is there a Sentence gone out against them? Are they all cast in Law?

Let the first Meditation be, *O quantum periculum!* O the danger that wicked men live in! they are all condemned men, their doom and Sentence is passed, the Warrant for their execution, 'tis already signed; 'tis God's great mercy 'tis not forthwith executed, they are not sure of a days respite. A man condemned in Law is not owner of his life; himself, his life, and all that he hath, are under forfeiture, they lye all at the King's mercy.

There are, that question the lawfulness of the title, that wicked men have to what they possess; and some over rigorously say, They are thieves, and usurpers, and have no right to them. No, verily, that's a false and groundless opinion, and may prove the occasion of much violence and wrong. No, wicked men, they are *bonæ fidei possessores*; they have as much right to their goods, as they have to their lives. Thou mayest as well murder a wicked man, as defraud, or rob him. But yet my Text tells them, they are under a sentence. The right they have to life, and all their possessions, 'tis but *jus diminutum*, a title forfeited to God's justice; while God reprieves them, they lawfully enjoy them, but God may take the forfeiture at pleasure, out them of all, seize all into his own hands, and serve an execution of vengeance upon them. Here is the danger that wicked men live in, the uncomfortable uncertainty of their state and condition. They are under an out-lawrie, can lay no claim to God's protection. They may cry out with Cain, *Every one that meets me, may slay me.* What Benbadad said to Abab, may infinitely more justly be said by God to every wicked man, *All that thou hast is mine*, all is forfeited to my Justice. That's the first Meditation, *O quantum periculum!*

2. Is this the condition of impenitent sinners? are they all concluded under a Sentence of condemnation? let this be the second Meditation, *O quanta stupiditas!* O the dulness and stupid carelessness of wicked men, not to be deeply affected with this woful condition; that they lye under the wrath of God, as condemned men, and not to be troubled at it! In matters of this life, if men incur forfeitures, or be sued to an out-lawrie, or fall into a *Præmunire*, how do they startle and bestir themselves; Men in such cases are ready to follow Solomon's Counsel; if a man be got into bonds for another, how careful will he be to be disengaged? Thus Solomon advises, *Prov. vi. 1.* *My Son, if thou beest a Surety, thou art ensnared; do this now, my Son, deliver thyself, give no sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, deliver thy self as a Doe from the hand of the Hunter, and as a Bird from the hand of the Fowler.* And men are generally ready enough to follow this counsel. But in our spiritual engagements and forfeitures

Serm. I. forfeitures to the justice of God, how few are affrighted with it ! How should we cry out in anguish, and perplexity, as *Cain*, when he was condemned, and turned from the bar ! O, now am I cast from thy face, a condemned man, every creature will be now *carnifex iræ divinæ*, ready to execute God's sentence upon me. 'Tis strange, that men should sleep securely in such a condition. How should men speak to their Souls, as *David* did ? 1 Sam. xx. 3. *As the Lord liveth, there is but a step betwixt me and death* ; the Sentence is past, the Gibbet is set up ; 'tis but, *I, licitor cubito caput*, 'tis but one word from God's mouth, and they will cover thy face, as they did wicked *Haman's*, and dispatch thee presently.

3. Is every wicked man under a sentence of condemnation ? then consider a third Meditation ; O the desperate boldness and madness of wicked men, that still add sin to sin, still incur more forfeitures, bring upon themselves more sentences of condemnation ! We should count him a desperate Thief, that would steal when he stands at the barr, and looks the Judge in the face, and hears the sentence of death denounced against him, and yet would have his hand in another mans purse. Yet thus, and much more audacious are presumptuous sinners ; they are already condemned, and yet will sink themselves into deeper damnation. *Belshazzar* had little list to revel it, when he saw the hand-writing on the wall ; though he did not understand it, yet at the sight of it he trembled with horror. Prophane men may clearly read their own sentence of damnation in God's Book, and in the transcript of it in their own consciences, and yet they abate not of their audacious sinning. Wicked men in their jollity are like a sort of condemned malefactors in the Gaol, that will roar and revel it in the mean time 'twixt their condemnation and execution. Such *St. Paul* saith, *Treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*. Such tire out the patience of God ; like *Shimei*, they forfeit ther Reprieve, hasten and pull down their own death and destruction, make the furnace and fire of Hell seven times hotter than for ordinary sinners.

You have seen the first Particular in the Text ; therein the first Ingredient and mixture of Justice, that's *sententia lata*, a sentence is pass'd upon every wicked work. Wicked men are sentenced to destruction : now follows,

Secondly, The second Particular, the gracious allay of this severe proceeding, that's *temperatura misericordie* ; here is an Ingredient of some mercy and favour in the forbearance of Sinners. That I called *sententia dilata*, the deferring of God's anger, the respite He gives to condemned sinners ; that which the Moralist calls *triquies* *seasione*, the pausing and leisurely proceeding of God in punishing of wicked men. The sentence is not Presently executed.

'Tis worth the enquiry ; Why doth God interpose so much delay 'twixt passing of sentence upon Sinners, and the execution of it, and inflicting it upon them ? Indeed amongst men in humane Judicatures, there may be many incident cases, and so many good reasons why Sentence of Death should stay and move slowly. *Nulla unquam de morte hominis cunctatio longa* ; Such delays amongst men they are oft-times commendable. But no such cases of Delay are considerable in God's proceedings, none of them incident in the course of Divine Justice.

1. *In evidentiâ facti*, want of clear evidence puts men to a *melius inquirendam*, makes Jury and judge to confess an *Ignoramus*, and inquire further into it. Such Obscurity may be in the Evidence, that may raise a scruple, and cause a delay. Obscurity in the Indictment may cause a delay in the Arraignment. It was *Job's* holy care in matters of Judicature ; *The cause that I knew not, I searched out*. Job xxix. 16. *Ignorantia Judicis, calamitas est innocentis*, Aug. An ignorant Judge passes many a wrong Sentence for want of due Information. But this case is not incident into God's Justice ; He sees clearly into every particular, into all the passages of our lives and actions : and so he can be a swift witness against us, as he speaks in *Malachi*. The darkest corners of our Hearts are open and evident unto him ; *He is greater than our hearts, and knows all things*. He saw *Adam*, though he hid himself ; He found out *Cain*, when no other accused him. *Achan's* sacrilege was closely carried ; but God's eye was upon him. So *David* carryed his Adultery secretly, and his Murder of *Uriah* ; but God discovered him. *Elisha* could, by the Spirit of Prophecy,

phesy, find out *Gebazi's* corruption and bribery; *Did not my Spirit go with thee, when the man turned from his Chariot?* To God all things are open and naked: He can search Jerusalem with Candles, Zeph. i. 12. pierce into the most concealed and secret sins. That's the first; So then want of evidence is no cause, why God should forbear to punish us.

Serm. I.

II. *Iniquitas Judicis*, some sinister aim of a corrupt Judge may cause some delay in executing of justice. We find this case in *Felix* the Governour of Judea; he was very slow in the tryal of St. Paul's cause, still delayed and put it off. What was the reason? he looked for a bribe, Act. xxiv. 26. *He hoped that money should be given him of Paul, that he might loose him, wherefore he sent for him the oftner, and communed with him.* There is such iniquity under the Sun. But this case, 'tis not imaginable in God's proceedings; no bribes can corrupt him, no gift out of the bosom can pervert his justice, or blind his eyes: money bears no sway in that High Court of Justice.

III. *Temeritas sententiæ*; Amongst men the Sentence may be unadvisedly denounced, and so call for more mature deliberation. This was *David's* error in the case of *Mephibosheth*, a lame impotent man, and so outstript by *Ziba's* forwardness, and false suggestions. *David* weighed not all circumstances, gave an ear to *Ziba*, kept not another for *Mephibosheth*, but passed a rash sentence, and condemned *Mephibosheth*. But God is not subject to any such over-sights; he ponders all our actions, weighs every circumstance, there is no circumventing of him by any false suggestions.

IV. *Præcipitatio passionis*. That's a fourth case, that should make a delay in execution of Sentence. There may be a mixture of too much passion in passing of Sentence, that may precipitate, and hurry a man forward to execute sentence. *Iram faciunt carnificem*, saith the Father: violent passions may cause violent proceedings. It was so in *David*; how passionately transported was he to revenge himself of *Nabal*? On goes his sword, like another *Jehu*, he marches furiously, he vows destruction to him that had wronged him. This was the great miscarriage of the Emperor *Theodosius* upon the Citizens of *Thessalonica*; they had committed a riot, and all in a fury, the Emperour commanded many thousands to be slain. To prevent more such furious proceedings, St. *Ambrose* advises him to make a law, that thirty days should pass between sentence and execution. But God is not liable to such transporting by passion; He proceeds calmly without passion, or perturbation. *Nihil puta à Deo subitum, quia nihil à Deo non dispositum*, saith *Tertullian*. *Fury is not in me*, saith God, *Isai. xxvii. 4*. It was a wise speech of an Heathen man, that forbore to punish his servants, because he was angry with them: *Εὐτυχῆτε ὅτι ὀργίζεσθαι ὤκνητε*. "Tis well for you that I am now in a fit of anger, else I would punish you. God feels no such fits or perturbations, and yet he forbears to punish sin.

V. *Impotentia exequendi*; that amongst men is cause of delay. Men must do as they can; sometimes they must be patient perforce; they want strength to punish, though they have just cause, and have a good mind to it. 'Twas thus with *David*, he had a strong desire to have punished and put *Joab* to death for the murdering of *Abner*, 2 Sam. 3. but *Joab* was too potent, *David* dares not do it, *I am this day weak, though anointed King, and these men, the sons of Zerviah are too hard for me*; they had too strong a party in the Army, and amongst the Soldiers. But this case is not incident unto God; *The weakness of God is stronger than man*. He is able to repay the stoutest and strongest of them all. The people could rescue *Jonathan* from the fury of King *Saul*; but there is no rescuing a sinner from the hand of God. *Though hand joyn in hand* (let them combine and associate themselves) *yet the wicked shall not go unpunished*, when God's time comes, *Prov. xi. 21*. God is strong and patient: men are oftentimes patient, because weak and impotent.

VI. There is yet another exigent amongst men, that causes delay in execution of justice, that's *Necessitas usus*. Oft-times Kings are fain to connive, and spare, and forbear due execution upon Malefactors, because of some exigence of state; the party offending cannot well be spared; they are, otherwise, men

of

Serm. I. of great abilities to do service, the Common Wealth cannot miss them. An unreasonable check given to *Abner*, the *General of the host* (though it were for a foul fault) lost *Ishbosheth* the Kingdom, 2 *Sam.* iii. It made *Abner* forsake the house of *Saul*, and bring about the Kingdom to *David*. In humane affairs, piety and justice oft-times give place to policy. But God is infinitely free from any such necessity of compliance. He stands in need of no wicked man's service; He can maintain his own cause, do his own work without the necessary use, or imployment of any wicked man. Why then should God forbear the greatest of them?

VII. There is yet another thing, that makes men slow in the punishing of offences, that's *Defectus zeli*, want of zeal against wickedness. Men are many times of *Gallio's* temper, that can see wicked disorders, and little regard them; luke-warm, yea, kea-cold in the execution of justice. They have no heart to contend with wicked men, they have no courage for the truth. 'Twas a rare virtue in King *Asha*, He took courage, and put away the abominations that were done in the land, 2 *Chron.* xv. 8. Such Governours are rare to be found. 'Tis God's complaint, and 'tis due to most men; *They are not valiant for the truth*, Jer. ix. 3. But God is a zealous God; he hates sin with a perfect hatred. His justice is, like himself, infinite and boundless. *Who knows the power of his Justice?* He abhors wickedness, 'tis an abomination to him. There is in God an implacable antipathy against all ungodliness. And zeal is no *cunctator*, or slow-paced in the execution of justice. 'Tis said, *Phineas* was zealous, and how hid he shew it? he presently took his javelin, and run through *Zimri*, and *Cozbi*, and dispatched them instantly. How is it then that our zealous, our jealous God, who is justice it self, should thus delay the punishing of wickedness, and not strike presently? Surely he doth it for these Reasons.

1. He doth it *in gloriam Patientiae*, for a glorious manifestation of his holy Attribute of Patience. His two great Attributes of Justice and Mercy, the full season of their manifestation upon the vessels of Wrath, and Mercy, is at the end, at the great day of reckoning. In the mean time there are some glimpses, and appearances of them; but then they shall shine forth most gloriously. In the mean time, his long-suffering, and patience, shall have its perfect work. This life, 'tis the time of the patience of God. This long-suffering, 'tis an Attribute God much Glories in; and he loves it, and commends it in others. *The discretion of a man defers his anger*, Prov. xix. 11. Again, *He that is slow to wrath, is of great understanding*, Prov. xiv. 29. And God glories in it himself. He puts it among his own Royal Titles. *St. Paul* calls him *the God of Patience*, Rom. xv. 5. 'Tis in his style of Majesty, *The Lord, the Lord, slow to anger. For my Name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain it*, Isai. xlviii. 9. The Scripture expresseth his anger by this Phrase, *His anger was kindled*; 'tis not always burning and flaming; it must be kindled first, and it will go out again, if it be not fed with the fewel of our provocations.

2. God strikes not presently, but forbears till afterwards *in exercitium fidei*; to teach men to live by Faith, and not by sense only, and present appearance. 'Tis the main rule of God's administration of the World, so to order, and carry things, that men may live by Faith, and perswade themselves there is a just and righteous God, though for the present he appears not to them. Eye-service is no service with him. Mankind then glorifies God, when they are perswaded of his Justice and Mercy, though for a time they do not see any manifestation of it. Faith will teach us to say with *Solomon*, *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet sure I know it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, but it shall not be well with the wicked*, Ecclef. viii. 12. This is the assurance that Faith gives us, *Say unto the Righteous, it shall be well with them: but no unto the wicked, it shall be ill with them*, Isai. iii. 10. If God should smite as soon as we provoke him, Sense indeed would startle, but Faith would be of no use. Here is the glory, that Faith and Religion gives to God, that we know

know he sits above, and sees all, and though the world be up in an uproar; and they that work wickedness, are set up, and God's servants persecuted, yet we know God hath a day of reckoning. *Videor, Taceo*, is now God's Word, he holds his peace, but yet he laughs at them, he sees their day is a coming, Psal. xxxvii. The Heathen man could say to one that wronged him; *Non metuo, ne non sis daturus pœnas, sed ne ego id non sum visurus*. The Lord reigns, be the people never so impatient; he sits between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet, Psal. xcix. 1. Thus Habakkuk quiets the Jews in their persecutions, that God's revenge upon Babylon will come in due time, though it tarry. Wait for it, it will surely come, and the just shall live by his Faith, Chap. ii. 3. Serm. I.

3. This forbearance of God, 'tis *actus φιλανθρωπίας*, a fruit of his goodness to the Sons of men, as they are his Creatures. Wicked men are the Workmanship of his hands, and accordingly he deals with them in this life. *Corripit ut suum, non abjicit ut alienum*, Tertul. He doth not utterly forsake the works of his own hands. This sparing and forbearing mercy, even the wickedest Creatures have experience of it. These two acts of goodness, *Tardius punit*, and *mitius punit*. He neither punishes speedily, nor yet extremely. O Deum, etiam ad Inferos usque misericordem! Even the damned in Hell find this kind of mercy. This David acknowledges, Psal. ciii. 14. God is slow to anger, he knows our frame, he remembers we are but dust, able to deserve that by sinning, that we are not able to endure by suffering. This forbearance and moderation, Isaiah declares, Chap. lvii. 16. I will not contend for ever, neither will I be wroth, for the Spirit would fail before me, and the Souls that I have made. This consideration moved God to respite Nineveh, so many thousands of my Creatures, and all to perish presently! He would not do it.

4. This forbearance of God, 'tis *invitatorium pœnitentiæ*. Why doth God respite the wicked, forbear to punish them? 'Tis to give them opportunities to repentance. *Patientia*, 'tis *vagina justitiæ*; 'tis as the Scabbard, wherein he sheaths his Justice. He will rather scare us with the Scabbard, than smite us with the Sword, to try if that may bring us to repentance. Thus speaks God of Jezebel, Rev. ii. 21. I gave her space to repent. Thus God in Ezek. iv. shews his patient expectation of the Jews repentance, by a type of besieging their City, and yet lying still on his side, not battering their walls, but waiting and expecting, if they would yield unto him. The Prophet was to lie on his side three hundred and ninety days; and every day signified a year: so long did he forbear, if yet they would repent. His forbearance 'tis mainly for that end, Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God should lead thee to repentance? So St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is not slack, as some men count slackness, but he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This long-suffering of God, 'tis to be accounted Salvation, Verse 15. And make that use of it; as long as God reprieves thee, a Pardon may come, if thou labour for it. *De nemine desperandum, quem patientia divina finit vivere*, saith Aug. As long as life lasteth, repentance is possible; He waits, if at any time he will turn to him. So Isai. xxx. 18. He waits to have mercy upon us. *Patientia*, 'tis *pœnitentiæ expectatrix*. Patience in God, expects repentance from us.

If this prevail not; then

5. God uses this delay in punishing wicked men, *ut æquius & gravius puniantur*; if they will not be reclaimed, then his patience hath this use and end; it justifies God's proceeding against them, and makes them the more inexcusable. Had he presently, suddenly struck them down to Hell, it had been just; but now thus long to expect their Conversion, to wait upon the hardness of their hearts, to try if they will return, to hold open a possibility of entrance into Heaven, surely the contempt of such patience must exceedingly justify their condemnation, and make it most equal. If they return not, this patience makes them fill up the measure of their iniquity. All this delay bodes them no good; all this while the Pit is digging up for the ungodly.

Serm. I.

Observe two ways of the dealing of God's Providence;

1. He is patient towards wicked men; how long? Till Heaven be filled with his Saints; when the number of his Elect is accomplished. Thus St. Peter tells us, *1 Pet. iii. 20. The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing; when that was finished, then came the Flood upon the World of the ungodly.*

2. There is another dealing of God's Providence in chastening of his Children. How long shall that time continue? Till Hell be prepared for the ungodly, *Psal. xciv. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, that thou mayst give him rest from the days of adversity, until the Pit be digged for the ungodly.* When Heaven is filled with Saints, and Hell with impenitent sinners, there is an end of God's patience.

Now Come we now,

Thirdly, To the third particular of the Text, that's *tractus dilationis*; How long this Sentence is delayed? That's set down in a general expression, there is no distinct time prefixed. God's forbearance, 'tis during pleasure, at his own disposal. Sure we are, we are aforehand with him by our sinning; whether sooner or later, he will reckon with us, we know not; but yet he is patient: we know not when he will come, whether at first, or second, or third Watch. This we know, he may require our lives presently; 'tis his great mercy, we are yet on this side Hell, not already destroyed. The Text affords us more hope, assures us 'tis not speedy. But yet how shall we estimate this leisurely proceeding of God, and make it appear, that he is full of forbearance, and slow to punish, and take vengeance on sinners?

We may judge of this patience and forbearance of God by these two estimates.

1. God is not speedy in punishing, he stays his hand, though there be many instances and exigents, that urge and plead for execution of vengeance.

1. He doth not proceed to punish *ad exigentiam justitiæ*. God's justice, that calls for punishment; 'Tis a righteous thing with God, saith Paul, to recompence ungodliness: Yet for all that, still he delays. Should he strike presently, 'twere due to his Justice; should he forthwith sink all Sinners into Hell, all mouths must be stopped, he were still a righteous God, he would be justified when he is judged. Well, though his Justice calls for punishment, yet his Patience for a time shall supersede his Justice, and stay the hand of it; his Justice shall not yet take place, that his Patience may be magnified.

2. He doth not proceed to punish *ad exigentiam æquitatis*; though equity calls for vengeance. He doth not punish, not only at the instance of strict, and severe, and rigorous justice: but though it be most reasonable, and equal to revenge, yet he forbears, even when equity itself, that is, long-suffering pleads for execution. After due forbearance, who can reasonably plead for more time? *Three years have I come, and sought for fruit, cut it down.* Nay, yet he will stay and expect amendment. To magnifie this equity, he reports himself to their own consciences, *Judge 'twixt me and my Vineyard*; Is there not evident equity to stub it up? and yet he spares it. After so many mercies shewed to them, after so many warnings given to them, after so many threatnings used against them, after so many convictions of their own consciences, yet he will spare them.

3. He doth not proceed to present punishment *ad exigentiam clamantium peccatorum*. Though all sins deserve punishment, yet some sins are of that violent provocation, that they call loud for vengeance. The Scripture calls them *crying sins*. Though such sins cry for vengeance in the ears of God yet God oftentimes respites punishment, lengthens out his patience. *Cain*, his brother *Abel's* blood cried to God for vengeance in the ears of God, yet God forbore *Cain*, and reprieved him. The sins of the old World were crying sins, so that it repented God, *that ever he made man*, and yet he forebore them an hundred and twenty years. The sins of *Sodom* were crying sins, *Gen. xviii. 20.* yet God is content to descend to a Parly and Treaty with *Abraham* for the sparing of *Sodom*. Could they have made good those easie Conditions for them, that *Abraham* obtained, they had been spared. The persecution of Gods Saints, the shedding of their blood,

blood, that's a crying sin, that startles God, yet even then, he remembers his patience, *Luk. xviii. 7. God will avenge his own elect, that cry unto him day and night, though he bear long with them.* *Rev. vi. 9. The souls of God's Saints that were slain, cry to God; How long, Lord, dost thou forbear to avenge our blood?* Answer was given them, *They must yet rest a while, e're God revenge them.* Nay, what say you to the Jews crucifying of Christ? that blood cryed for vengeance. When they slew the Heir, they themselves grant, *Sure he will destroy these wicked men,* *Mat. xxi. 41.* Well, for all that they were spared, not forty days only like Nineveh, but full forty years e're that sin was revenged.

4. God doth not proceed to punishing *ad exigentiam gloriæ*; though it be high time for him to maintain and vindicate his own glory, though that suffer, and be wronged for his forbearance, yet he delays. Oft-times God's glory suffers, by his patience, among wicked men. *Sua Deo patientia detrahit; plures enim Dominum idcirco non credunt, quia sæculo iratum tam diu nesciunt, Tertul.* Men question his justice, yea, his Providence, and Deity, for being thus patient. St. Peter tells us of scoffers, and mockers, that will sport themselves with this patience of God; *Where is the promise of his coming?* St. Peter is fain to clear God of slackness, he is so patient, *2 Pet. iii.* Thus prophane men in *Isai.* said, *Chap. v. 19. Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it;* here is much threatening, but nothing comes of it. Nay, not only wicked men mock at it, but God's own Servants are troubled at it. *Jeremy* he wondered at it, that God should be so patient; *Why do the wicked prosper?* And *David* he was offended at it, it tempted him to give over his piety and religion; it wounded his heart to hear prophane men say, *Where is now their God?* Yea, *Jonas*, God's own Prophet could object this forbearance to God, as if 'twere not for God's own glory, or for the credit of his Prophet, to be thus patient. *Jonah* snuffed at God's patience, it displeased him exceedingly, and he was very angry; *Was not this my saying, when I was in mine own Country? I knew that thou wast slow to anger,* threaten an hundred times, and never strike, send us to threaten and denounce judgments, and then his patience interposes and sets back all. That's the first estimate. Though there be many instances and exigencies, that call for vengeance, yet God forbears, doth not presently punish.

II. Take now a second Estimate of God's patient proceedings in punishing wicked men, and that shall be by way of comparison in other of God's proceedings. He is not always speedy in taking vengeance on wicked men, he doth it slowly.

1. Comparison is this, *Tardius quam Angeli puniuntur.* The Angels that fell, though far more excellent Creatures than men, the chiefest of all the workmanship of God, yet no space, or time of forbearance was given to them. No sooner were they fallen into sin, but forthwith they were immediately punished, tumbled into Hell presently, no patience used towards them. 'Tis the admiration of the holy Angels, and the envy and vexation of Devils, that God should bear thus with sinful man, and be so quick, and severe to those excellent Spirits; thus to crush and grind to powder those vessels of Gold, and yet to spare and forbear base and vile earthen Pitchers. *Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest thus forbear him!*

2. Take a second Comparison, *Tardius quam ipsius filii puniuntur.* 'Tis strange, God often-times uses more delay and patience towards wicked men, than he doth towards his own children. *Judgment oft-times begins at the house of God,* *1 Pet. iv. 17.* So *Jer. xxv.* when God sends his Prophet with a Cup of fury into all the world, who must first drink of it? His own people, *Judah* and *Jerusalem.* See how quick God is with his own people. *Josh. xxii. 18. If ye rebel to day against the Lord, to morrow he will be wroth with the whole Congregation.* He will not suffer sin to lie upon them, but they shall smart for it, *David* observed this dealing of God, and was troubled at it, *Psal. lxxiii. 5. Wicked men saith he, they are in no trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; but as for me, all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* God presently punished

Serm. I. punished him, took him in his naked bed, and swing'd him soundly. How did God exercise his patience to *Balaam*, that false Prophet, that came to curse God's People? let him come, and go again, and did not destroy him; and yet how sharply and speedily dealt he with the Holy Prophet, that was sent by God to *Bethel*? for failing in one circumstance, a Lyon slew him presently. *Moses* for omitting of Circumcision was in danger of death: How many prophane men scorn God's Sacraments, and yet go unpunished? *Uzzah* more speedily and fearfully punished for a well-meant, unadvised touch of God's Ark, than the sacrilegious *Philistines* were for their great prophanation of it. God's Children feel the smart of his Rod sooner and oftner than many wicked men.

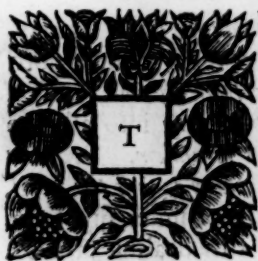
To shut up all. Is God thus patient to wicked men? Admire his patience, and make good use of it, but build not thy hope of Heaven wholly upon it. Rest not in this, that God forbears thee, sue for his forgiveness, place not thy salvation upon his forbearance. Forbearance, that we see may be the portion of Castaways, pardon and forgiveness, that's the portion of his Children. A man condemn'd, but yet for a time reprieved, makes use of this favour to sue out his pardon; otherwise 'tis cold comfort to be respited for a time, and then executed. God stays long ere he punishes, but at last, he hits home, and revenges his enemies, if they do not submit. The Heathen Poet, could say, *ὅψις θανάτου δαΐμονι μύλοις, δαΐμονι δὲ λείπεται*. God's Mill is not always going, but when it moves, it grinds all to dust and powder. Say not with the evil servant in the Gospel, *Matth. xviii. 26.* *Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all:* but let this be thy Prayer; *Lord, have mercy upon me, and forgive me all, abolish the hand-writing that is against me, cancel my Bond, reverse thy Sentence, pardon my Sins, say unto my Soul, thy Sins are forgiven thee, thy peace is made up, in Heaven for thee.* Otherwise, 'tis not the space for repentance, but the grace of repentance, that must free thee from Hell, and deliver thy Soul from the wrath to come.



A S E R M O N

On Matthew xi. 12.

And, from the dayes of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.



His Chapter sets out a Story of a Message sent unto our Saviour Christ from *John the Baptist*, being now in Prison. The Parties by whom he sent it, were two of his Disciples. The enquiry they were to make was, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* that is, *Art thou the Messias, the Christ of God, and Saviour of the World?* A Question, not arising out of any doubting in *St. John* (he was too well grounded in that saving Truth, to call it into Question) but tending to the further instructing and informing his Disciples in the knowledge of Christ.

John's preaching was like *Moses* his Law, as an Under-School-Master, or *Usher*, to bring in men to Christ. He baptized none in his own name; he prepared his Auditors

Auditors, as a chaste Virgin to be espoused to Christ. He was but the Friend of the Bridegroom; as Abraham's servant sent to prepare a Wife for Isaac. He trains them not up for his own glory, but for the glory of Christ. Serm. I.

Christ having given satisfaction to John's Disciples, and dismissed them, he enters upon an honourable commendation of John the Baptist: not to John's Disciples, they needed no encouragements to cleave unto him, they were but too much addicted to him, they envied Christ himself for the Baptist's sake, John iii. 26. *They say unto John, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness; Behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.* The spirit that was in them lusted unto envy, no need to commend John Baptist to them. Nor doth Christ give this commendation to John in the time of his greatness and prosperity, when all men flocked after him, and Herod got him to the Court, and did observe and reverence him; ('twas superfluous then to commend him) but when the giddy multitude had forsaken him, and he was fallen into disgrace at Court; when the Scribes and Pharisees contemned him, here is an end of all this great Innovation, he hath preached himself into Prison: Herod hath frowned upon him, and clapt him up. Now, when John is thus forsaken of all, Christ comes and maintains his honour and worth, advances him against all the disgraces that were put upon him, tells the People the World was not worthy of such a Doctour and Preacher to live amongst them.

How should this encourage us in the service of God, who will stick fastest to us when all the World forsakes us! Let the World flight, and contemn, and persecute God's servants; yet Christ will honour and maintain their name, uphold their cause for them. St. Paul found this by good experience, 2 Tim. iv. 16. *At my first answer no man stood with me; but all men forsook me, notwithstanding, the LORD stood with me, and strengthened me.* This made Paul to work out his heart in the service of Christ. See how God and Christ both glory in their servants. He writes their names not only in Heaven; but he erects monuments of their praise in earth also. Thus we see God glories of Abraham; *I know Abraham that he will teach his Children and household to fear me.* Thus also he magnified his servant Job, how there was none like him in the earth. So he maintains the honour of Moses against Aaron, and Miriam repining at him; *My servant Moses is faithful in all my house,* Numb. xii. 7, 8. *How durst you speak against my servant Moses?* These choice servants of God, like David's Worthies, all their names are upon record.

But the main honour of all that Christ puts upon John is this in my Text; the efficacy of his Ministry, the great good he did in the Church of God; *he turned many unto righteousness,* he outwent the labours of many before him, he filled Heaven with Converts, at his preaching they thronged in: God gained much glory in the salvation of many: *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence.*

Ye see the ground of Christ's commendation. Many an Oratour would have passed over these, and pitched upon some other matters, his Honourable descent, and his miraculous conception, Christ overlooks these. We should learn to praise as God praises; *He is approved whom the Lord commends,* 2 Cor. x. 18.

So then, the words report to us the great success that God gave to John's preaching of the Gospel, the great zeal and forwardness of many in embracing Religion; the doing of that to which Saint Paul exhorts Timothy; *Fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal Life.* They set out unto us such a Conversion as Paul wrought at Ephesus, Acts xix. 20. *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*

And this great Conversion, 'tis set out by two particulars:

First, here is the date of this great work, together with the means how, and by whom it was effected: that's in these words, *From the days of John the Baptist, until now.*

Secondly, Here is set forth the greatness of this work, and the good success of it; men were made earnest and violent in labouring for salvation, and accordingly they attained it: that's expressed in these words; *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* First,

Serm. I.

First, Come we to the date of this great work. It bears date from the days of *John* the Baptist. And this circumstance hath many aspects, looks divers ways, and will afford us several Meditations. These words,

First, Have reference to Saint *John*.

Secondly, They respect the condition of the Church in St. *John's* Time.

First, They respect St. *John*, and

I. Put honour upon his Person.

II. They put honour upon his Ministry.

III. They put honour upon the Age in which he lived.

I. These words, *Since the days of John the Baptist*, they are words of much honour and respect to him; and they shew us what is that which will gain a man honour, and estimation, and praise with God, and that is to be an Instrument of doing much good. *John* is thus renowned and preferred before the *Pharisees*; nay, before the Prophets: because he was so prevailing an Instrument of such great conversions. With men usually the getting of good (*If thou doest good to thy self, men will speak good of thee*, saith the *Psalmist*) but with God the doing of good is the matter of true praise. 'Tis the commendation that the Holy Ghost gave of *Barnabas*, *Acts xi. 24.* *He was a good man, and much People were added to the Lord by his means.* 'Twas that in which St. *Paul* excelled all others, that would indeed be comparing themselves with him; *He was in labours more abundant. I have laboured* (saith he) *more than they all*; he wrought mighty conversions.

And 'tis so in all other conditions of men. Dost thou desire to treasure up a good name amongst men: Labour to do all the good thou canst; let the Time and the Place thou livest in, be the better for thee. 'Twas *David's* commendation which Saint *Paul* gives him long after he was dead, *Acts xiii. 36.* *David he served his own generation by the will of God.* He was useful and beneficial to the times he lived in. How honourable is that commendation of *Nehemiah*, and how comfortable to him; *Remember me, O Lord, for the good that I have done to this People.* To be a *Joseph*, a *Moses*, a *Nehemiah*, to God's People, 'tis the greatest commendation.

II. These words, *Since the days of John the Baptist*, they put honour upon his Ministry. *John's* Ministry had this Prerogative, that he was the first that published and preached the Gospel. And see here he carries the name of it. The beginnings of the Gospel are reckoned here from the days of *John* the Baptist. 'Tis an happy thing, and the matter of much honour, to be the beginners of any good, to lay the first stone in the Churches building; to be like *Paul*, a wise Master-builder, to lay the Foundation, the chief honour of the building belongs to him. Those Saints above other, God doth register and cannonize that have been Leaders, and Examples, and Authors of good, Planters of Churches, or first Reformers. This is the honour the Scripture puts upon *Seth*, *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, *Gen. vi. 26.* This was *Abraham's* honour, when all was over-spread with Idolatry, then he restored the Worship of God, that gained him that name, to be the Father of the Faithful. St. *Peter* accounted it a great honour done to him, that God made choice of him to be the first Teacher to the Gentiles, *Acts xiv. 7.* What dignity like this, to be a *Moses*, a Deliverer, a Law-giver to God's People, an *Elias*, a Repairer of Religion, a *Zerubbabel*, a *John*, a *Paul*, an *Athenasius*, an *Augustine*, a *Luther*? 'Tis a blessed thing to bear date in God's Kalendar, to be a beginner of any good in the Church of God. He well deserved the name of *εὐαγγελιστής*, that is, *much to be commended*; who as St. *Paul* speaks of him, *was the first fruits of Achaia.* 'Tis the honour of *Antioch*, that there the Disciples were first called *Christians*, *Acts xi. 26.* As on the contrary, what Infamy like this, to be an Author and Beginner of any evil, an *Achan*, a troubler of Israel, a *Jeroboam* that made Israel to sin, a *Theudas*, a *Judas*, a *Barrabbas*, to be inventors of evil things, as St. *Paul* brands them, *Rom. i. 30.* to be an *Hananiah*, that taught Rebellion against the Lord, *Jer. xxxviii. 16.* like the two wicked men *Ezekiel* speaks of, *Chap. xi. 2.* *These are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this City.* Such men, their name shall rot, and be a curse and execration to all Posterity.

III. These

III. These words, *Since the days of John the Baptist*, they put honour upon *Serm 1.* the age in which he lived. Those days were happy days that enjoyed such a Minister and means of Grace. I, That's it which ennobles and honours an Age, and Time, and Place, to enjoy the opportunities of Grace and Salvation; that makes this Time so renowned that they had *John Baptist* amongst them, such a Preacher of Righteousness.

For outward respects, these times were not such happy times. The People of God were under the bondage of a Foreign power, and *Herod* a cruel Tyrant had got the Rule over them. Flesh and Blood would account those times sad times. No, as long as Christ's Kingdom goes forward, and a New Prophet is raised, and God visits his People, they are happy times. This raised *Capernaum*, and lifted it up to Heaven, that Christ was amongst them, and preached the Gospel to them, *Mat. xi. 23.* Good men make the Places and the Ages in which they live, to be good; as *Noah* proved to the People of his Age, *he shall comfort us concerning all our trouble and sorrow.* Amongst men, we account those times good, when any excellent Art or Invention that proves useful to Mankind hath been found out; as *Printing*, and thereby the Propagating of Learning and Knowledge. How much more happy are those times, when Religion prospers, and the Gospel hath free course, and is glorified amongst us! This made the *Bereans* more honourable men than they of *Thessalonica*, *that they entertained the Gospel with all readiness,* *Act. xvii. 11.* And on the contrary, the want of these blessed opportunities, makes an Age an evil and woful Age. As he said of himself, that he was born, *& celo & solo, & seculo infelici*, in an unlucky hour. Thus the *Psalmist* bewails the misery of the Jews, *We see not any Visions, no Prophets left amongst us,* *Psal. lxxiv. 9.* Such dark times, are dismal times.

That's the first Consideration of the words as they reflect upon *John Baptist*, they honour his Person, his Ministry, the Age in which he lived.

Secondly, These words are considerable, as respecting the condition of the Church in *St. John's* time, 'tis various and changeable, and subject to alterations. Before *John's* coming Religion was at a low ebb, little Piety appeared; the Pharisees Hypocrisy, and the Sadduces Prophaneness had overspread that People. Now Religion begins to prosper and flourish. Before there were small Conversions; but a few, but an handful; now God hath sent a plentiful Harvest. 'Tis the condition and success that the Church finds, 'tis not always alike; sometimes it is more conspicuous, sometimes overcast and much obscured: Sometimes God's Ministers, like *St. Peter*, they labour *all night and catch nothing*; at other times they have a plentiful fishing, and their Nets are laden and filled with Converts. What a low tide was the Church at in *Noah's* time! not eight righteous men in all his Generation. Then again Religion flourished, and *men called upon the name of the Lord.* How low was the Church in *Eli's* time! the Word of God was rare, no open Vision, or Prophet among them: then God raised up *Samuel* and *David*, and Religion grew into request again. The Church is compared to the Moon, it hath its Wainings and Eclipses; and yet again it is filled with light. When Christ came, what a small number of faithful ones were found? Old *Simeon*, old *Anna*, a few that waited for the *Messiah*, but then soon after, the world went after him.

It should teach us thankfulness, that God hath let us live in blessed times where his Gospel flourished, and the means of Salvation lay open to us. We might have been born *Pagans*, *Infidels*, *Papists*, but God reserved us to Times of Truth and Peace, would we have known the time of our visitaion, and made use of it. What faith Christ to his Disciples? *Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear; for many have desired to see, and hear, but have not seen, nor heard them,* *Mat. xiii. 17.* Make use of those opportunities which yet God affords us. *John* shall not always preach; Christ will not always clock like an Hen to gather us under his Wings. *The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it,* *Luke xvii. 22.*

We have done with the date and season, that was, *the days of John the Baptist*; we now come,

Secondly,

Serm. I.

Secondly, To the effect of *John's* Ministry, how it wrought with the people: It had a wonderful and gracious effect upon them: It begat in them an earnest and importunate pressing into Heaven. 'Tis expressed in words of great vehemency; *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

And in it are two things remarkable;

I. Here is their *Holy Endeavour*, they press upon it *with violence*.

II. Here is the *Happy Success*, they *take it by force*, and are possessed of it.

First, Let us consider the strength of their endeavour, they *offer violence to the Kingdom of Heaven*. A strange form of speaking, that the Kingdom of Heaven should be subject to any violent assaults! For Earthly Kingdoms, 'tis no wonder to see them surprized by violence; but Heaven is a *Kingdom that cannot be shaken*, Heb. xii. Thieves cannot break in upon it, Mat. vi. What construction shall we make of these words?

1. 'Tis no bodily violence that can be offered to it, as if we could take Heaven by storming it; build up some *Babel* that may reach up to Heaven, and scale the Walls of it; as the Heathen Poets feigned of the Giants that waged War with their Gods. No, he that sits in Heaven laughs such Assaults to scorn. Heaven is not liable to such *Onsets*, 'Tis no bodily violence.

2. Nor is it the hypocritical violence of some perverse Zealots; whether right or wrong, do any thing, though never so unjust and unlawful, upon pretence of gaining of Heaven, and setting up of that Kingdom; the advancing of Christ's Scepter, and to compass that, use any means, though never so unwarrantable, defraud, oppress, persecute all that stands in their way. Such *Nimrods* there are in the world, *mighty Hunters before the Lord*. Hunters, ye know, keep not in the Road, but over Hedge and Ditch, as their game leads them; stick at nothing though never so lawless and violent, if it makes for their advantage. The Devil broached this Divinity betimes in the Church. Saint Paul crys out of it, *Let us do evil that good may come of it, whose damnation is just*, Rom. iii. 8. No, *God hates Robbery for burnt-offerings*, Isai. lxi. 8. *Will you steal, murder, and swear falsely*, saith God in *Jeremy*, and then come and stand before me in this house, as if you had been doing some service for God? No, God can carry forward his own work, maintain his own cause, uphold his own glory, without the ungodly and violent practices of such Pretenders.

3. Nor is it the superstitious violence that some would offer to themselves for the gaining of Heaven. Such frantick Christians there have been, maiming, and dismembring their bodies to fit them for Heaven. No, The great Council of *Nice* made a strict Canon against such Superstitions. And yet afterwards the *Circumcelions* in *Africa*, and other Donatists, thought, by murdering themselves that they should purchase Heaven. No, 'tis not the unlawfulness of violence, but the earnestness of violence that is here commended; not an injurious violence, but an industrious violence. As elsewhere the Gospel commends not the falseness of the unjust Steward, but his forecast and providence. And Christ commends to our imitation, not the venom of the Serpent, but the wisdom of the Serpent. *Be wise as Serpents, but innocent as Doves.*

So then, the point briefly is thus much, that *John's* preaching wrought this blessed effect in his Auditors, and so should the Gospel work in us; it begat in them an holy violence, and strong striving to gain Heaven.

For the better understanding of this Truth, we will make these four Enquiries:

1. *Quibus mediis?* What were the means by which St. *John* wrought this earnestness in them to be thus violent?

2. *Quibus actibus?* Wherein doth this violence and earnestness consist?

3. *Quibus fundamentis?* What are the reasons and grounds why this violence must be used?

4. *Quibus motivis?* What are the motives and inducements that may stir us up to it?

1. *Quibus mediis?* What were the means by which the Baptist prevailed thus with the People, to put them upon so earnest a pursuit for the winning of Heaven?

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We may conceive the means to be of two sorts,

First Sort of means were Doctrinal, such as refer to his Doctrine and Ministry.

Second Sort were Personal, those that refer to his life, and demeanor.

I. There was that in St. John's doctrine which enflamed his Auditors with a desire of Heaven. There were three things in John Baptist's Doctrine, that had a special efficacy upon the hearts of the people.

1. The first was, *vehemens reprehensio*; John came not in the Spirit of *Eli*, but in the spirit of *Elias*; used not a gentle reproof only, but rebuked them sharply. He was a sharp and severe reprehender of all sin and impiety. He was a Son of Thunder, he soothed up no man in his impiety: He spared not the Souldiers, not the Publicans, not the Pharisees, no not *Herod* himself. *O generation of Vipers!* there he doth sharply reprove them. *The Ax is laid to the root of the tree*; there he doth as dreadfully threaten them. He convinces them of Sin, and he acquaints them with Hell, and the terrour of that punishment, and thus awakens them. I, Men thoroughly convinced of sin, driven out of all excuses, affrighted with the threatnings of those heavy punishments that will overtake them: such men are likelyest to be wrought upon. *Reprove them sharply, that they may be found in the faith*, saith Paul to *Titus*, i. 13. That, if any thing, may work upon them. The Scribes and Pharisees they would find fault with some Ceremonious Irregularities, and impose upon the people some outward expiations, which never entered into the Conscience, or brought any spiritual trouble upon mens souls; but John's word goes deep, he flashes Hell-fire in their faces if they will not repent. Such kind of Preaching will arouse men, and make them look about them.

2. A second thing observable in Saint John's preaching, by which he prevailed thus mightily with them, was *gratiosa invitatio*, a sweet and gracious invitation unto the Kingdom of Heaven. John did not only convince them, but perswades them; not only threatens them, but promises them; not only scares them with Hell, but acquaints them with the hopes of Heaven, tells them, *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. The Scribes and Pharisees kept away the Key of Knowledge, but John sets open Heaven Gates to them. John was *fibula Legis & Evangelii*, as *Augustine* speaks of him; as it were a mixt and compounded Minister of Law and Gospel. By the one he drives them; by the other he draws them: he carries fire in one hand, and water in the other. I, hope of Mercy and Pardon will make Rebels come in and submit themselves. Persist in your sins, and Hell shall devour you: Repent, and turn to God, and Heaven shall receive you. That's a winning word; such gracious assurances will work effectually with them. But then,

3. The most effectual means by which he prevailed, is *clara annunciatio Christi*, his clear and evident preaching of Christ, *ἀπεκάλυψε*, he points out the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the World. Here was John's great advantage, he brings in the promised Messiah, the Author of Grace, preaches him more clearly and distinctly than any before. That, above all, is the converting truth. As 'tis said of Paul and Barnabas their preaching of Christ, *They so spake, that a great multitude believed*, Acts xiv. 1. A full Moon makes a full Sea; so a clear and effectual preaching of Christ makes a full Church. All men will come into him that can shew him the Messias. The Samaritan Woman can bring out all the City with these tidings, John iv. 29. *Come, see a man that told me all things, that ever I did: Is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the City, and came unto him*. All the moral and subtile discourse in the world cannot prevail so much, as *Ecce Agnus Dei! Behold the Lamb of God!* John i. 29. *Believe in the Lord Jesus*, Acts xvi. 31. This is the converting Truth, this little Leaven will season the whole lump; this little grain of Mustard-seed will grow to a great tree; this one Spark will enflame the whole World; this small Stone will grow to an huge Mountain. *Behold the Lamb of God*, makes mighty conversions.

These are the Doctrinal means by which John prevailed.

Secondly, There were *media personalia*, there were some accessory helps in his person,

Serm. I. son, that advanced this work; and made it so prosperous and prevailing with the people.

I. His constancy, he was a constant and resolute Preacher of Truth. Christ gives him this Testimony, he was not a *Reed tossed to and fro with every puff of wind*, guided his course by the motions of the heavens, not by the Weather-cock, altered not his copy upon any mans pleasure. Neither the favour nor the frowns of *Herod* made him surcease the preaching of Truth. He was strongly grounded in the truth committed to him, and did not depart from it; *Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them*, Jer. xv. 19. 'Tis a great means to convert others to Religion, to be well grounded and confirmed in it our selves. It gives authority to what we speak, when we can say with *Peter*, *We follow not deceitful fables; but what we have seen, and are well assured of*. As we may not assume to our selves an absolute infallibility, so we must be far from a desultory levity in matters of Religion, not altering our Religion, as the World alters her fashion. Ministers must not be *bilingues*, not double-tongued, even in this sense also, as *Athanasius* speaks, sometimes speaking one thing, sometimes the quite contrary, but constant in their Profession. Establishment in the present Truth, is a great inducement to others to embrace that Doctrine which we so constantly hold to.

II. A second inducement that prevailed with the people, was St. *John's* sobriety and gravity, and holy conversation. He was no delicate, voluptuous man, taken with pleasures, not cloathed in soft and gaudy raiment, no flaunting Courtier; but grave, sober, severe. His life, his food, his apparel, and all his demeanor, was a second Sermon. The Wilderness fitted him to undergo the Court-life without luxury, and to suffer, and endure the Prison without tediousness. Such a man gains great authority in the hearts of all men. As *Chrysostom* speaks, *Sanctorum aspectus, & vestium amictus, & calceorum mos*; a Christian carriage and outward deportment should be such as may adorn the Gospel, that the Ministry be not blamed, that the Gospel be not evil-spoken of, that others may be won by the good conversation of Christians. Saint *John* wrought no miracles, but his holy conversation was as effectual as Miracles, saith St. *Augustine*, to prevail with the people.

III. A third inducement that won the people to embrace his Doctrine, was his great humility. Saint *John* might have been what he would, the people were ready to set him high, and to put honour upon him. He might have been taken for that great Prophet which *Moses* foretold of: he might have been accounted *Elias* himself, not only in Spirit, but in Person also. Nay, the People were ready to acknowledge him the Messiah, the Christ of God. Saint *John* owns none of all these dignities, but disclaims them all. Many an one would have assumed these offers, at least have held the people in suspense; it will make for the credit of his Ministry to be highly thought of: No, Saint *John's* lowly Spirit refuses these advantages. He was express in his answer, *he confessed and denied not*, but tells them plainly, he was neither so, nor so; but a poor Minister of Christ, willing, but yet not worthy to do him service. I, this will commend us to the Consciences of all men, when we seek not our own glory, but the glory of Christ. Thus *Peter*, when he had wrought a Miracle, saith, *Ye men of Israel, why look ye upon us, as if our power or holiness had cured this man?* No, the Name of Christ hath made this man whole, Acts iii. See this spirit of St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. iv. 5. *We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your servants for Jesus sake*.

We have done with the first Enquiry? What were the means by which St. *John* prevailed with the people, and made them so zealous in the pursuit of Heaven.

Come we to the next Enquiry,

2. *Quibus actibus*, Wherein doth this violence and earnestness consist in pursuing after Heaven? It will express it self in these particulars.

I. It requires an high prizing, and judicious esteeming of it; a valuing of Heaven, and the gaining of it above all other things. Will a man strive, and toil, and pursue after that which he sets nought by, and makes no reckoning of? That which is needless, is also worthless. *Quod opus non est esse, charum non est*: Cato. No, if thou beest slight in thy esteem of Heaven, thou wilt be slow in thy pursuit of it. When

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the People had entertained a base report of the Land of *Canaan*, that it was not worth the labour, they concluded to return to *Egypt* again. But what said *Caleb* and *Joshua*? *Ob! 'tis a good Land, let's go up and take it at once.* If thou accountest Heaven a Treasure, then thou wilt search for it. Possess thy mind with the holiness and happiness of that place; meditate on that glory that shall be revealed on thee, and it will make thee despise all other things, count them dung in compare with Heaven; it will make thee think no labour or pains too great for the attaining of it. This put life into *St. Paul*, and quickened up his care, *Phil. iii. 14. I press toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* That's the first; esteem it highly, and thou wilt pursue it earnestly.

2. A second thing that makes up this holy Violence, is an earnest desire of it, when the longings of our soul are strongly bent upon it. A cold faint wish that we may be in Heaven hereafter, when we are at leisure, or can live here no longer, is far from violence, it will put no stress for it. No, we must fix our Will upon it, ravish our hearts with the thoughts of it, enflame our souls with the desire of it; as *David* did: *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, Psal. xxvii. 4.* Give over all other wishes, so thou mayest attain to this longing. Thus the Spouse expresses the fervency of her love to Christ; *Ob! I am sick of love.* The Scripture calls it *hungering and thirsting. Fames, quæ non fastidit, sed cibo pellitur.* It cannot be satisfied till it hath attained to it.

3. This violence for Heaven will put us upon an unwearied seeking, and enquiring, and pursuing after it. Violence in affection will beget in us violence in action. Thus *Solomon* sets out the seeking for Heaven; *If thou cryest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seek for it as for silver, and searchest for it, as for hid treasure.* It will make us importunate with God; take no denial; as the *Canaanitish* Woman did with Christ; wrestling with God for it, as *Jacob* did with the Angel: it will spare no labour or endeavour. Such endeavours are set out in Scripture in terms of vehemency: They are called *the fightings of Faith*, *1 Tim. vi. 12. The strivings of Prayer*, *Rom. xv. 30. The wrestlings of a Christian*, *Ephes. vi. 12.* See how *St. Paul* expresses his violence, *Phil. iii. 12. διώκω εἰς πᾶσις ὑμῶν, I pursue, saith he, and stretch out my self.* It signifies the utmost strains of the body to catch at any thing.

4. Violence will endure difficulties, venture upon dangers, run hazards to attain its desires, leap over hinderances, break through every thing to gain Heaven. *The Juggard saith, there is a Lyon in the way. Samson* is resolute, and goes out to meet it and grapple with it. *Caleb* and *Joshua* confess the strength of their enemies. What then? *Let's go up at once, and overcome them.* Such are the violent pursuers of Heaven. Tell *Paul* of bonds and imprisonment that do await upon him, 'tis no news to him, he looks for them. *We must through many tribulations enter into Heaven. My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy, Acts xx. 24.*

5. Violence will shew it self in a firm and fast laying hold on that which it makes after. Such must be the apprehensions of a Christian. He that is violent for Heaven, will fasten upon it firmly, believe stedfastly, embrace the Promises of it assuredly, unite to Christ inseparably, intrench himself in his hope of Heaven impreguably. Thus the Spouse, when she found him whom her heart searched for, laid fast hold on him, would not part with him; as *Elisha* to *Elijah*, *As the Lord lives, and as thy soul lives, I will not leave thee.* Alas! how feeble are most mens apprehensions of Heaven! They put all upon adventure, never work their hearts to any strong assurances. What saith *Paul* to *Timothy*? *Fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 12.* And again, *Heb. iii. 6. Hold fast the confidence of our hope firm to the end.* Violent pursuances will beget strong apprehensions, firm persuasions, undoubting reliances upon the Promises of Heaven.

We proceed to the third Enquiry,

3. *Quibus fundamentis?* What are the grounds and reasons of this violence? What necessity is there to use such violence and earnest endeavours for the gaining of Heaven? Surely there is much necessity for it every way: Take it in these five particulars:

Serm. I.

1. The first is *naturalis distantia*. There is naturally a great distance and disproportion 'twixt us and Heaven. Were we Borderers, or born within the Confines of Heaven, we might more easily step into it. But there is a great space and distance 'twixt us and it, a great gulf that must be passed through. And this distance, 'tis not *distantia loci*, but *dissimilitudinis*, a great disproportion, and dissimilitude 'twixt our nature and it. *Longè sumus à te in regione dissimilitudinis*, Aug. in *Confess.* "We are far from thee, being so unlike to thee. That's heavenly, we are earthly; that's spiritual, we are carnal; that's incorruptible, we corruptible. Much ado there must be to fit flesh and blood to inherit Heaven. Great pains required to raise up our nature to so high a condition, and to make us meet partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. Col. i. 12. That's the first ground, the greatness of the distance, it will cost pains and travel to reach unto it.

2. A second ground why violence must be used, is *vitiosa contrarietas*. There is not only a large distance, but a vitious contrariety that is in our sinful nature, to the attaining of Heaven. There is not only *aliquid ultra*, but *aliquid contra*, not only a dissimilitude, but an opposition and contrariety that must be overcome in us, which hinders us from Heaven. *Corruption cannot inherit incorruption: No unclean thing must enter into that holy place.* And 'tis no easie thing to subdue this contrariety that is in our nature, much labour is required to the effecting of it. Our Nature is so corrupted, that Christ tells Nicodemus, we must be born a-new, or we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. St. Paul shews us this, Col. iii. 1. where he bids us, *Seek those things that are above.* He shews us what it will cost us, *Mortifie your members, which are upon the earth.* Mortifying, that's a killing word. We must offer an holy violence to our sinful lusts. *Cut off thy right hand, pluck out thy right eye*, if it hinders thee from Heaven: those sins that are as profitable as thy right hand, those lusts that are as pleasant as thy right eye, these must be mortified. Try thy strength but with any one sin, thou wilt find it no easie matter to subdue and mortifie it. St. Paul, that great Proficient in this hard work of Mortification, yet still found it an hard and laborious task, *He beat down his own body, and kept it in subjection, if by any means he might attain to the Kingdom of Heaven.*

3. A third ground for this necessity of violence, is *legalis exclusio*. It requires much ado to get into Heaven; we are all excluded by the sentence of God's Law. Heaven-Gates stand shut against us: God hath placed a Cherub with a flaming sword, that keeps the passage into Paradise. Do you think it an easie matter to appeale so angry a God, to get the reversing of so severe a Sentence, to obtain admittance by that flaming sword, and to get Heaven-Gate opened with a little knocking? No verily, nothing but earnestness, and all possible importunity, can remove these obstacles.

4. There is yet a fourth ground, *Evangelica difficultas*. Though the Gospel gives us hope to enter into Heaven, yet upon such conditions as require great violence and contention. Repentance: Oh! how painful is that to flesh and blood! Believing of Mysteries which nature conceives not: Oh! 'tis the hardest thing in the world to believe. The bearing of the Cross, *We must through manifold afflictions enter into Heaven*: the hating of that which we most dearly love, if they hinder in this holy pursuit; the loving of those whom we hate most bitterly, our deadly enemies: these Evangelical Duties are not easily performed, but with much pains and difficulty.

5. There is yet another necessity of violence, that's *inimica oppositio*: We must look for enemies that will oppose us. If thy face be towards Heaven, and thou makest that way, expect to be encountered with manifold Adversaries. As Chrysostome speaks of Eliab's passage to Heaven in a fiery Chariot; Oh! how did the Devil, the Prince of the Air, storm to see him passing through his Territory and Region! So will Satan way-lay thee, and stir up Enmities and Persecutions against thee. *All that will live godly in this present World, shall suffer persecutions*, 2 Tim. iii. 12. He that passes through an enemies Country (such is the World to a good Christian) he must look for blows, he had need arm himself with courage, and break through with violence, and strong resolution.

Ye see the grounds why this violence is necessary, and it will yet further appear

pear by the insufficiency of those false pretences, by which some bear themselves in hand, that 'tis no such hard matter to enter into Heaven, but exceeding easie. *Serm. I.*

(1.) As first, 'tis *in electione præparatum*, the Kingdom of Heaven, 'tis already prepared for us, we are ordained to it, *Mat. xxv. 34. God hath appointed us to eternal life, we are vessels of honour.* True, 'tis *præparatum*, and yet *rapiendum*. 'Tis designed to us, and yet we must strive for it. As it was in Lot's deliverance from the destruction of Sodom; The Angel assured him he should be delivered, and escape to Z'ar; *I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither:* and yet Lot must bestir himself; *Escape for thy life,* saith the Angel, *lest thou be consumed,* Gen. xix. 22. The Land of Canaan was a Type of Heaven, that was a Land of Promise, God did absolutely intend it them: but yet the People were to go up armed, it must cost them blows to get the possession of it. God's purposes do not exclude, but imply, and enforce our best endeavours. Christ tells us, *the Kingdom is prepared;* but yet before entry there must be feeding, cloathing, visiting; much to be done, and that implies much to be suffered, Hunger, Nakedness, Imprisonment, manifold afflictions, much hardship to attain it.

(2.) But then secondly, the difficulty is overcome to our hands, 'tis *in redemptione acquisitum*, Christ hath overcome, and purchased, and possessed it for us. True, and yet we must be *violenti*, though we be *redempti*. We must distinguish *inter jus, & possessionem*. Our Title is good upon our Saviour's Purchase; but yet the possession is encumbered with many difficulties. The Leprous man had title to his house, but might not be suffered to enter into it till he was thoroughly cleansed. Many conditions are strictly required before present admission.

(3.) But then thirdly, these conditions are mitigated and qualified, 'tis *parvulis, & infirmis promissum*. Weak Repentance, if it be true; imperfect Faith, and our honest Endeavours, will be accepted. True, we may be weak ones, and yet must be violent.

I. The least grain of Grace, is not easily got. *Diu flevi, ut sese intus mihi persuaderet.* It cost Augustine tears and Prayers to attain to any measure of true Grace. O ye of little Faith, saith Christ to his Disciples, after so much teaching, so many miracles to confirm and strengthen them.

II. A weak Faith must be a striving Faith; as the Apostles begged of Christ, *Lord, increase our Faith;* as the poor man in the Gospel begged it with Tears, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*

(4.) But then all these strugglings and strivings may be prevented. Heaven may be *in momento acquisitum*; some have slept into Heaven in an instant. As the Thief upon the Cross, upon his first Prayer to Christ, Heaven was bestowed on him. True, it may be sudden, but then it must be violent. That rare, extraordinary Convert, used great violence.

I. *Vis contra consuetudinem*, to alter so suddenly, after so long a custom in sinning, argues great violence.

II. *Vis contra tentationes*; to overcome so many temptations as that Holy Thief did, argued great violence. His Fellow-Thief blaspheming, all the People reviling of Jesus, our Saviour's great ignominy which then he suffered; to break through all these dissuasions of Faith, requires great violence.

III. The less time, the greater violence. To do that in an instant which the Saints have been doing all their life-time, was no easie performance. *Maximum spatium minimo tempore conficere, is motus velocissimus*, saith the Philosopher: He that can rid so much way in so small a time, must bestir himself mightily.

Which, if it be so, that such violence is required for the obtaining of Heaven, let me ask your Consciences three Questions.

First, What will become of those remiss, slothful, perfunctory Christians, that count a little flight, formal Religion, without any life or alacrity, will do the deed? Surely such Seekers as they, will fall short of Heaven. What saith Solomon? *Strong men attain riches.* Who ever prospered in any Trade of life by such poor endeavours? which is all that such men bestow for Heaven.

Secondly, If such violence be requisite for gaining of Heaven, what will become of

Serm. I. of those that wholly neglect it, never mind it? Let them take Heaven that list, they never busie their thoughts about it: in what case will they be? What saith our Saviour, *Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, for many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able.* If some Seekers shall miss of it; they that regard it not shall never attain it.

Thirdly, What will become of violent opposers, if only violent seekers shall gain it? They that set themselves violently against it, in what case will they be in? Cry down Religion, Mockers, and scornors of all true Piety: let such consider that sad saying of *St. Peter, If the righteous be scarcely saved,* not without much ado, what will become of those that reject the Gospel?

Lastly, Quæ motiva? What motives are there to stir up this violence in gaining of Heaven.

I. Consider the *Price*, 'tis a *Kingdom*.

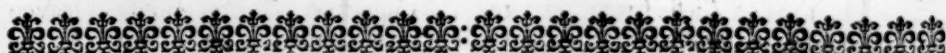
II. Consider the *Success*, they shall *speed*.

III. Consider the *Loss*, if thou *failest*.

I. Consider the *Price*, 'tis a *Kingdom*, worth the striving for. Crowns and Scepters will be a good recompence for strivings and fightings. And this conquest, it is not like our conquests in this world. Here the chief Commander gets the Kingdom, the other Souldiers must be content with inferiour rewards. But in this Warfare, every valiant Soldier shall be a Conqueror, every Conqueror shall be a King. *Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne,* saith Christ. Who will not bestir himself to gain a Kingdom?

II. Consider the *Success*; *The violent take it by force.* They are sure to speed. In our earthly fightings there often fall out many *disappointments*; but never any man strived for Heaven indeed, that ever missed of it. We fight not as uncertain, but are sure to speed, if we faint not. *Pugna, adjuvabo te; vince, coronabo te: Augustine. Fight, I will assist thee; overcome, I will crown thee.* In earthly pursuit, there may be failings. *The Race is not to the swift, nor the Battel to the strong, Eccles. ix. 11.* But no man that sought Heaven in good earnest, did ever miss of it.

III. Make sure of Heaven, or else let me tell thee, Hell will make sure of thee. Hasten to *Zoar*, or else perish. We cannot say with the two Tribes; *We will stay on this side Jordan,* not fight for *Canaan.* *Regnare nolo, sufficit mihi saluum fore.* No, if Heaven do not receive thee, Hell will certainly lay hold upon thee.



A S E R M O N

On St. MATTHEW iii. 10.

And now also the Ax is laid to the root of the tree: Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.



Aint *John the Baptist* is by some of the Fathers, called *Fibula Legis, & Evangelii*, the Clasp that unites the Two Testaments. In his Person and Office, the Law and the Gospel both joyned and met together. In respect of the Law, so he is called a Prophet, the last Prophet that immediately foretold Christ's coming and manifestation; his Father *Zachary* terms him *The Prophet of the Highest*. He was *Elias redivivus*, a second *Elias* raised up to the Church. In respect of the New Testament, so he was an *Evangelist*; pointing out and discovering the *Messias* already come and exhibited.

He bore a double Office.

First, He was a Messenger sent before Christ, *Malac. iii. 1. Behold I will send my Messenger to prepare my way.* That was his Prophetical Office, as belonging to the Old Testament.

Secondly, He performed the Office of an Usher, attending upon the Person of Christ, proclaiming his coming, pointing out his presence; *Behold the Lamb of God* actually exhibited. So he was an Evangelist and Minister of the Gospel.

And as he was a Forerunner in his Person and Office; so he was in his Doctrine. The Doctrine of *John*, it was a Doctrine of Preparation, and that's the Doctrine of Repentance. The aim and scope of his Preaching was *to call men to Repentance*. His Baptizing is called *the Baptism of Repentance*, Mark. i. 4. Yes, Repentance is that which fits and prepares men for the entertaining of Christ. The Apostle calls it, *The Doctrine of the beginning of Christ, the first Principle of Christianity. Repentance from dead works*, 'tis the laying of the first Foundation, *Heb. vi. 1.* The Prophet *Jeremy* compares it to the first plowing of the Land, before the seed be cast in, *Jer. iv. 3. Break up your fallow-ground, and sow not among thorns.* To preach Christ, and salvation by Christ, before Repentance, is to sow your Land before you plow it, and that is preposterous. The same Prophet compares it to Circumcision; *Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts.* Under the Law, no uncircumcised person might eat the Pass-over. *Let him be first circumcised, then he might eat of it. Exod. xii. 44.* So no impenitent man can have his part in Christ; let him first be penitent, then let him lay hold and believe in Christ.

Now the Baptist stirs up his Auditory to the practice of Repentance by a double Motive.

First, The first is of the nature of an attractive.

Secondly, The second is of the nature of an impulsive.

First, The Attractive, that is more winning and gracious. He uses a sweet invitation, to encourage them, that's the promise of Mercy and Salvation; Verse 2. *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; that is a motive to draw them. But, then, because he met with Hypocritical and obstinate Sinners, for them he hath another motive, and that is,

Secondly, An impulsive, a motive of Terror. If the inducement will not draw us, the affrightment must drive us. *Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*, saith St. *Jude*: that's the denouncing of judgment and destruction. *The Ax is laid to the root of the Tree*, saith St. *John*; as if he should say, "Repent, and behold! Heaven Gate is open to receive you; repent not, and Hell-Gates are wide open to devour you; Repent, and the Kingdom of Heaven shall receive you; repent not, and the Kingdom of Hell is ready to destroy you."

The Text then you see, 'tis an instant and vehement calling to Repentance, enforced upon us by the threatening and denouncing of a dreadful Judgment. And in it take notice of two things.

First, Here is a Judgment threatned, *The Ax is laid.*

Secondly, Here is a Condition annexed; and that is a description of those against whom it is denounced; those that are barren and unfruitful trees, that bring forth no good fruit, they must expect and undergo that judgment, *The Ax shall hew them down, the Fire shall consume them.* Thus as before the Roman Magistrates, the Officers carried *Virgas & secures*, a bundle of Rods, and a sharp Ax: So we see *John Baptist*, this *Ante-ambulo Christi*, the Usher and Officer of Christ, he comes before Christ, not only with rods and chastisements, but with an Ax of destruction, to hew down, and stub up, unfruitful and unprofitable Christians.

First, The Judgment; that is specified and represented by way of Similitude, under the type and resemblance of a Metaphor.

First, For more lively expression. The Similitude of Trees is frequent in Scripture. Such was *Jotham's* Parable about the Trees in *Libanus*, in the Book of *Judges*. Thus *David* compares a good man to a fruitful Tree, *Psal. i. 3.* the prosperity of a wicked man, to the flourishing of a Bay-tree, *Psal. xxxvii. 35.* the righteous man to a Palm-tree, *Psal. xcii. 12.* The Church is compared sometimes to a Fig-tree, *Luke xiii. 6.* Sometimes to a Vine-tree; *Isaiah* calls the Church of God, *His pleasant Plant*, *Isai. v. 7.* And God makes use of these Similitudes, as sensible, and so more conceivable representations of his spiritual and eternal punishments.

God's

Serm. I. God's Judgments, especially those in Hell, are unconceivable to us now in their own nature. What the Prophet speaks of the joys of Heaven, is most true also of the torments of Hell; *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what those fearful things are, which God hath prepared for impenitent sinners.* Therefore to make us more apprehensive of them, he uses these bodily and sensible representations, *Gnawing of worms, flames of Fire, rivers of Brimstone, cutting down, stubbing up by the roots, and casting into Fire.* But, Secondly, This Similitude which the Text here uses, is purposely chosen, as carrying an intimation of three things.

I. It shews God's Sovereign dominion over us; we are in his hand and disposal, as the Trees are in the power of the owner, and Lord of the Soil. We are all his Plantation; he may make us trees of the Forrest, if he pleases, set us in a waste and dry Wilderness, he hath done so with many other Nations; or as he hath done for us, plant us in the Garden and Paradise of his Church. If he hews and cuts down, if he stubs and roots up, who can say, *Why dost thou so?* Thus God asserts his power over the Jews by the similitude of a Potter, and his vessels of clay, *Jer. xviii. 6. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you, as the Potter with his clay? Behold, as the clay is in the Potters hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.* And Saint Paul makes use of this similitude, thereby silencing of mens murmurings against God's proceedings; *Rom. ix. 20. O man, who art thou that replyest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou formed me thus? Hath the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?* That's the first intimation, God's sovereignty over us. This Similitude,

II. It shews the Justice and Equity of his proceedings. To cut down a barren and unfruitful tree that cumbers the ground, the Rules of good husbandry tells us 'tis reasonable. To weed up noysome herbs, to cut up thorns and nettles, to stub up a dead or a dry tree, that is become good for nothing, but for the fire, who pleads to have it spared? God appeals to man's equity in this case, *Isai. v. 3. O men of Judah, judge I pray you, betwixt me and my Vine-yard;* after all my cost and pains, it is still barren and unprofitable; why should I not disburthen the earth of it? fit for nothing, but the fire. Thus Christ avows the justice of God in the destruction of the Jews, *Luke xii. 7. Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbers it the ground?* That is the second intimation. This similitude,

III. It shews the nature of God's judgments. The destruction, which is here threatened to the Jews, was not only a spiritual and eternal, but a temporal destruction; an utter dispeopling of that Nation, the rooting them out from being a People, and it was done by the Armies of the Romans, that brought a final destruction upon Jerusalem. What were they in God's account? They were *securis in manu Dei*, but as an Ax in God's hand. 'Tis God that strikes, and hews, and cuts down; men are but instruments. As in the planting of the Church, men are but God's instruments. *What is Paul? what is Apollo? but Ministers by whom ye believed?* *1 Cor. iii. 5. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* So when he doth unchurch a Nation, and brings ruine upon it, he is the Master of the Work. It is his Arm that smites; all creatures are but means and instruments of his vengeance; *Isai. x. 5. O Assyria, the rod of mine anger, and the staff of mine indignation: Shall the Ax boast it self against him that hews with it?* Thus the Prophet calls the King of Babylon, God's Battle-ax. Let those that destroy God's Church pride themselves in their successful prevailings, St. Augustine tells them, they are but *iræ drivæ carnifices*, he assigns them only the Hang-mans office; they are but the executioners of God's wrath on his People. 'Tis he that bids the *Sword, Go thorow the Land*, *Ezek. xiv. 17.* and he can recall it.

In particular, the Judgment which the Text threatens, is made more terrible by four Aggravations:

1. Is the nature of it, 'tis an Ax; that's a destroying instrument.
2. Is the use of it, 'tis actually laid to; that's an imminent danger, a close application.
3. 'Tis

3. 'Tis *ad radicem*, 'tis laid to the root, that is a deadly part. Stub up the root and all is gone. Serm 1.

4. 'Tis, 'Tis now laid; the time is present, and so the judgment unavoidable. For the understanding of the words we must make these three Enquiries.

First, *Quid Arbor*, what is meant by the Tree?

In General we may understand by it every man; but yet, more properly, this tree is *arbor plantata*. Not so much man in his natural condition, as it were a tree or wilding in the Forest; or, as St. Paul calls it, a *wild Olive Tree*: But it is purposely meant of a tree in God's Garden or Orchard; that is, a man living in the Church of God, such as David describes; *Psal. xcii. 13. Those that are planted in the house of the LORD, those that are set in the Courts of our God.* Under the Old Testament, the Jews, and so in proportion, we that live in God's garden and nursery, we that are Christians; those are the trees that God deals withal here in my Text. *Isaiah's Vine*, *Isai. v. our Saviour's Fig-tree*, *Luke xiii. A vine-yard in a very fruitful hill*; Christians living within the Church, under the means of grace. The second Enquiry is:

Secondly, *Quid radix*? What is meant by the Root?

And we may resolve it in a threefold sense.

I. It points out the Jews original. They gloried that they were the off-spring of Abraham, *Verf. 9. We have Abraham to our Father*: and so it signifies their natural descent and propagation. *The Ax is laid to the root*; they shall be cut off from the privilege of their birth and original, in which they boasted; God will no more esteem them the seed of Abraham. Thus God in *Ezekiel* rejects them as degenerate bastard-slips, not Abraham's progenie: *Thy Father is an Amorite, thy Mother is an Hittite*; the brood of cursed Cham, not of the lineage of Abraham.

II. The Root, it points out their external profession; they were Members of the visible Church; *Salvation was of the Jews*. They were the people of God ingrafted into the true Olive-tree. Well, let them not glory in that Privilege, *The Ax is laid to the root too*; their external profession shall fail them: The visible body of the Church shall be destroyed, the Candlestick shall be removed, God is writing a bill of Divorce against them: they are *Lo-Ammi*, and *Lo-Ruamah*, as *Hosea* terms them, *no more God's people, God hath no more mercy upon them.*

III. The Root is the vital part, the fountain of life, that by which the tree stands, possesses the soil, lives, and flourishes. Then the *Ax to the root* is a deadly Judgment, renting them from their place and possession. The Land shall spue them out: *their place shall know them no more; their Country shall be laid waste*, suffer a final, utter desolation. That is the second Question. The third Enquiry is;

Thirdly, *Quid securis*? What is meant by the Ax? Expositours are various in their opinions. St. Gregory by the Ax understands Christ. "Christ, saith he, coming in the Church, is an Ax brought into the Orchard. *Divinitas ferrum, humanitas manubrium*: His Humanity was as the helve or handle; his Divinity that's as the hatchet. The sharp edge of that doth cut and pierce. Some say, that the Gospel is meant by this Ax. That's St. Hierom's apprehension of it. It hath a sharp, cutting, and piercing power in it. That's a property very agreeable to the Word of the Gospel: *I have hew'd them down by the Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth*, *Hof. vi. 5.* Other Expositours understand by this Ax, *ultionem*, & *judicium divinum*; God's fierce wrath and vengeance, his judgments bringing destruction. Indeed, all these put together, make up one compleat sense of the words: Christ, the Gospel, and Vengeance. Christ, he holds this Ax in his hand; the Gospel, that sharpens the edge, hastens and enforces the stroke; and then final destruction, that's the blow that is given. So then, put them all together, and then we may take notice of these two things:

I. The nature of the Judgment, which is here threatned, 'tis *securis ad radicem*, 'tis an Ax laid to the root.

II. The nearness of this Judgment; nay, more than so, the presentness of the danger; 'tis *nunc apposta*, 'tis now already laid to and applyed. God is now fetching of his blow, his Arm is lifted up, the stroke is giving to cut down and destroy them.

Serm. I.

1. Let us consider the nature of the Judgment that is now threatned, 'tis an *Ax* at the root. And we may conceive it by two references or comparisons.

1. By comparing this Judgment *ad gladium oris*, to the *Sword of God's Word*; that's a cutting and wounding Weapon. And then observe, *Those that are not wrought upon, whose hearts are not pierced and wounded by the Sword of God's Word, they shall be cut down and destroyed by the Ax of his Judgments*. Indeed the kindest way to convert us, and to call us to Repentance, is the Ministry of his Word, the call of the Gospel. God always begins with that first, and his Patience continues that means, as long as there is any hope to do good by it. But when that works not with us, we blunt and turn the edge of this, it cannot enter. Then God is enforced to send Judgments upon us. This was his method and dealing with the Jews, *2 Chron. xxvi. 25. He sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes and sending them: and this he did, till there was no remedy*. Mark that word, *Ver. 16. Till there was no remedy; Nothing else would prevail, therefore he brought upon them the Caldeans, sent them into Captivity*. Indeed could the Word alone prevail with us, God would not lay upon us the least affliction. He takes no delight in afflicting the Sons of Men. The Church acknowledges it in her Captivity, *Lam. iii. 33. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*. As a skilful and careful Physician uses all gentle and fair means first to recover his Patient, but if they will not do, then he must proceed to more violent courses, lancing, and searching, and cutting off. Thus the Lord shews how loth he is to come to courses of extremity; *Hos. vi. 4. O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? how shall I make thee as Admah? I have hew'd them by the Prophets, but it hath done them no good; I have writ unto them the great things of my Law, but they accounted them as a strange thing; they would not own it, or take warning by it*. What saith God in such a case? *Isai. i. 24. Ah! I will ease me of mine Adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies*. If the Word cannot prevail, the Ax shall destroy us.

2. There is a second comparison of this Ax, *ad cultum amputatorium*, that's to the pruning knife applied to the boughs. Lesser Judgments and Chastisements, God hath used them, and they prove unsuccessful; then he takes the Ax into his hand, and brings an utter destruction. Observe, *Those that are not bettered by the pruning knife of God's Chastisement, and more gentle corrections, they are forlorn and desperate, nothing can be expected by them, but the Ax of destruction*. 'Tis the Method of God's proceeding with men. He begins in a more gentle way, by easier corrections, tries if they will do good, but if they work no Reformation, but sin grows obstinate and incorrigible, then he lays the Rod aside, then he must look for consuming Judgments, utter destruction. Ye may see this in the case of Sodom. First, he sent a Preacher amongst them, Lot, a holy man, a Preacher of Righteousness, he reprov'd their abominations; well, they slighted that means of Conversion, yet God forbore them; then he takes the Rod, into his hand, sends an Army of Enemies amongst them, *Gen. xiv. 1. Chedorlaomer* makes war against them, and takes them captive. God scourged them with that Rod; tries what good that will do upon them: but they are not bettered by it, they go on still. Then God comes with his Ax in his hand, strikes at the root, rains down fire and brimstone upon them, overthrows them with a final and dreadful destruction. This course God likewise took with *Abab*. First, he sends his Prophet *Elijah* to reprove him; that succeeded not, he despised his Ministry: Then he sends the King of Syria, affrights him with that Army, yet that reclaims him not; then God sends a Dearth into his Land, it rained not for three years and an half, that prevails not; then *Abab* is ripe for Destruction. Now, who shall cause him to fall at Ramoth-Gilead? Then God sweeps him away as dung from the Earth. The like course God took with the Church of the Jews. First, he furnished them with Prophets, that called upon them, but they turned the deaf ear to them; then scares them with the approach of Enemies, besieges them by the Caldeans, that stirs them not; then come Earthquakes and Famine, that betters them not; then carries them to Babylon, sends them into Captivity, yet they vex and grieve his holy Spirit: All these prunings and dressings proved

proved but lost labour : At last he comes with a destroying Weapon, the Ax of De-
 solation and final Perdition. Serm. I.

1. It should teach us to answer God's visitations in the beginnings of his displeasures, to learn his meanings in his gentler Corrections; *when his wrath is kindled but a little*, as David advises, *Psal. ii. 12.* Christ counsels us, *Sit down and consider, whether thou beest able to meet him that comes against thee with twenty thousand Judgments.* Know, saith the Prophet, 'tis an evil and a bitter thing thus to stand out with God : *Will ye provoke the LORD to wrath? Are ye stronger then he?*

2. This point must be a Prognostication of following destruction. Wouldest thou know thy state and condition, at what distance and nearness thou art to destruction? Consider well with thy self, what warnings thou hast neglected, what chastisements thou hast slighted, how many rods God hath spent upon thee. *O my son (saith Solomon) despise not the chastisements of the LORD.* If thou hast, *thy destruction sleeps not.* Thus the Prophet made a certain sign to Amaziah of his destruction : *I know (saith he) God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast not hearkened to my counsel,* 2 Chron. xv. 16. Thus Moses seals up all his Admonitions, *If any man hear the threatnings of this Booke, and shall resolve to go on in his wickedness, the wrath of the LORD shall smook against that man, and he will destroy him from under heaven.*

We have seen the nature of the Judgment, 'tis an Ax at the root.

II. Let us consider and observe the nearness, nay presentness of the Judgment. 'Tis not barely threatned, *the Visior is not for many days to come.* No, the Ax is in God's hand, 'tis now laid to the root of the tree. Now : What is that Now? What is the importance of that circumstance? Now, when the Messias is exhibited, Christ is come amongst us : Now, that the Gospel is published, and those tidings of Grace are brought into the World ; Now the Ax is laid to the root of the tree ; Now Judgment draws near. It may seem somewhat strange, that Christ should be the Messenger of Vengeance. He comes with words of comfort ; the time of his appearing, 'tis called *the acceptable year, the day of Salvation*, the year of Jubile ; and so the Gospel is the tidings of peace and pardon. 'Tis so by God's primary intention ; but, by occasion of our entertainment, if that be amiss, the Gospel is the greatest procurer and hastner of Judgment. Divers Reasons of it.

1. The Gospel, 'tis the last date of the patience of God. He hath used forbearance to the world before ; but, when he sends his Gospel to us, then 'tis high time we should answer his expectation. Thus the Owner of the Vine-yard speaks, *Luke xiii. 7. These three years have I come and sought for fruit of this Fig-tree.* Now, if after all the culture which the Gospel uses, it still continues barren, then *cut it down.* We must not look, that God will alwaies connive at our unfruitfulness. *Acts xvii. 30. The former times of this ignorance, God winked at ; but now he commands all men every where to repent.* The Patience of God, though in the Attribute it be infinite, yet in the exercise he hath set limits and bounds, put a period to it. *I held my peace, saith God, but now I will cry as a Woman in travel.*

2. The Gospel hastens Judgments ; because it convinces the world more clearly of sin. And a sinner, after conviction, if still he persists, is ripe for destruction. Ignorance is a motive to God, to use patience towards us ; *the times of ignorance, God winked at.* But now the Gospel brings a greater light into the world, he that sins against the Gospel, sins against actual clear light. *Had I not come, they had not had sin (that is, nothing so great) but now they have no cloak for their sins, nothing to excuse them,* John xv. 22. Thus Paul convinces the Jews, *I demand, Have they not heard? Yes, (saith he) the sound of the Gospel is gone abroad.* Now Conviction, 'tis a great aggravation of sin, a great hastner of Judgment. This Reason St. Augustine gives, why, since Christ's time, and the publishing of the Gospel, the world hath suffered more heavy calamities, than it did before. The Heathen objected it to Christians, and St. Augustine grants it : But mark his Reason, *Mundus nunc, sicut malus servus sciens voluntatem Domini, gravius puniatur.* "Now, saith he, the World is like that bad servant in the Gospel, that
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"knows

Serm. I.

" knows his Masters will and doth it not, and therefore is beaten with more stripes.

3. The Gospel, it hastens Judgments; because it occasions the increase, and growth, and ripeness of sin more abundantly, and so makes it fit for Judgment. Indeed the least beginnings of sin deserve destruction; but yet God observes this Oeconomie and dispensation, that sin shall grow to a certain maturity and ripeness, and then comes destruction. *Gen. xv. 16.* there 'tis said, *The sins of the Amorites are not yet full.* So saith God to *Jeremy*, *What seest thou? A ripe Almond-tree*, saith the Prophet: What did that betoken? ripeness of sin: and what saith God? *I will hasten my words to perform it*, *Jer. i. 11.* Now the Gospel brings a ripeness to sin, not of its own nature; where it works kindly, it mortifieth sin, and kills the root of it; but the malice of man is more enraged by it. As *St. Paul* saith, *Sin abounded through the Commandment*: So the Gospel, where it converts not, aggravates sin, and so hastens destruction. As the approach of the Sun ripens not only good corn, but brings up noisom weeds; the more rain, and the hotter weather, the more the Tares grow. Thus the Doctrine and Miracles of Christ enraged the *Pharisees*, brought them to that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. There was none guilty of that sin till Christ came. 'Tis a sin, that is bred only under the Gospel. Hear what the Prophet *Joel* speaks, *Chap. iii. 13.* *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get ye down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great.* 'Tis Christ's Prophecy of the last times; then wickedness shall abound, and the fulness of that is the season of vengeance.

4. The Gospel is an hastener of Judgments, because it hath *virtutem congregativam*, & *separativam*; it makes a collection of God's People, and so by consequence, makes a separation. It first men by grace, and gathers the elect: and the Church being once finished, that blessed number being accomplished, judgment hastens upon the world of Unbelievers. While *Lot* staid in *Sodom*, the City continued: Hear what the Angel says to him, *Gen. xix. 22.* *Haste thee away, I cannot do any thing till thou be at Zoar.* But then fell storms of Fire and Brimstone. Now the Gospel, that finishes the number of the Elect, and so hastens God's Kingdom. Till that be gathered, God forbears the world, though it be devoted to destruction. As a woman, though condemned to die, yet, if she be with Child, she shall be reprieved till the Child be born: But when the work of the Gospel is consummate, then God's judgments will break in upon the world. As soon as *Noah* was in the Ark, then the Flood came. When you have inn'd your Corn, then you turn your Swine into the Fields: So, when the Gospel hath finished God's Harvest, then he lets his Judgments loose. What said *Moses*? *Get ye from the tents of these wicked men*; and then the Earth swallows up the Rebels.

5. The Gospel it hastens Judgments, because sins against the Gospel are more unpardonable, of greater provocation.

(1.) 'Tis a sin of higher contempt, offers greater indignity to God, than sins against the Law. It hath *digniore nuntium*. The Law was delivered by *Moses*, the Gospel by Christ. Though they slight his servants, yet surely they will reverence my Son, saith the owner of the Vineyard in the Gospel of *St. Matthew*. And what saith *Paul*? *If they escaped not, who despised him that spake from Earth, of how much sorer punishment are they worthy, than contempt him that speaks from Heaven?* Here is a greater than *Moses*, a greater than *Jonas*.

(2.) Sin against the Gospel, is a sin of greater Ingratitude. And Ingratitude, that's a sin of high provocation. The offers and renders of more mercies, if despised, argue great unthankfulness, and so hasten heavy Judgments. The Gospel, that offers the richest mercies; in it God offers us his Son, his Spirit, his Kingdom; if these be not accepted, it puts God's bounty to a *non plus*, makes him cry out, *What could I have done more for my Vineyard?* *Hai. v. 4.* We justly deserve to suffer the worst of all his Judgments, because we despise the best of all his Mercies. The strongest and the sweetest Wine, makes the sharpest Vinegar; the richest Mercies, if abused, turn into the greatest anger, breed the heaviest indignation.

(3.) Sin against the Gospel, 'tis a desperate sin, and so hastens Judgments. Such sins set us beyond hope, render us unpardonable. Why so? because such an one pec-

cat contra remedia, he sins against the remedy and means of recovery: As he that shall have eaten poyson, if he will use the means he may be cured; but if he takes the medicine, and spits it out, or flings it from him, there is but one way with him, he must certainly perish. He that breaks the King's Laws, deserves punishment, but he may escape it: but he that scorns the King's Pardon, and flings it from him, he is past hope. Serm. I.

It must make us look about us, that are Christians, and live under the Gospel. As we have the fairest opportunities, so we run the greatest hazards. The sins of Christians are of a greater size, of a lowder cry, of a deeper dye, of a more heavy punishment. The Gospel is no indifferent thing; it will either mend us, or end us. 'Tis like strong Physick, we shall be much the better, or far the worse for it. It will set us either past danger, or past recovery. We are now upon the brink of danger; the Gospel works either thorough reformation, or else it brings utter destruction.

We have seen the first Particular, the Judgment threatned, both in the nature of it, and in the nearness. Let us now,

Secondly, Take notice of the condition annexed, the quality of the Persons against whom it is threatned, the great sin, that hastens destruction; and that, the Text tells us, is *Unfruitfulness*. The want of fruit, and that good fruit too, pleasant, profitable, abundant fruit, that's the Title of our Perdition; the merit of destruction. An unfruitful Christian is devoted to perdition, nothing can exempt thee.

Many Pleas we may imagine to our selves, to escape the punishment; but they will not serve us.

First, Thou canst not plead *dignitatem Agricolaë*. Oh! I am of God's own planting, he hath set me here with his own hand, surely he will favour the work of his hands. No, that shall not excuse thee. He that planted thee, if thou provest unfruitful, shall pluck thee up again; He will destroy the work of his own hand. 'Twas the Plea of the Jews; Oh! *We are thy People. They made their boast of God*. No, if we answer not his expectation, he that planted us, will root us up again. *They are a People without understanding, therefore he that made them, shall not have mercy upon them*, saith the Prophet Isaiah. See how he dealt with his first Plantation, when it proved unkindly, *It repented the Lord that he made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at heart*, Gen. vi. 6. and he adds, *I will destroy man whom I have created*.

Secondly, Secure not thy self in *privilegio soli*. Think not the priviledge of the soil wherein thou art set, that it shall excuse thee. O, thou art planted in a choice place, in the Garden of God! No, that shall not exempt thee. Thou art a Member of the visible Church! No, that shall be no protection. Nay, that will add to thy condemnation. A man will endure an unfruitful Tree any where, rather than in his Garden or Orchard. In the Fields or Hedges, men suffer them to grow; but they cut them down, cast them out of their Gardens. God is not so much displeased with the unfruitfulness of Heathen and Pagans; they are Trees of the Forest. Christ shews where they grow, Luke xiv. 23. *in the High wayes or Hedges*. I, but a Christian grows in God's Garden, that must be fruitful. *Every branch, that bears not fruit in me, he takes away*, saith Christ, John xv. 2. *Macer taurus in pingui arvo*: Lean Kine in a fat Pasture is an ill sign.

Thirdly, Secure not thy self in *bonitate folii*, in the fairness of thy leaf of outward profession; this will not exempt thee from the stroke of the Ax. A formal Christian will content himself in some leaves, and shews, and out-sides of Religion. Ye see, they will plead it at the day of Judgment, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? Thou hast taught in our Synagogues, we have eat and drunk in thy presence*, heard the Word, received the Sacrament. But that's all, here all the sap runs out into leaves. To such he will say, *I know you not*. These Fig-leaves will not then shelter us. *Habent & folia circumvolitantia decorem quandam*, saith Saint Basil: they are pleasant and delightful, but they are but conjectural signs of a good tree: *By their fruits ye shall know them*. He that searches for fruit, lifts up every leaf: so will God do when he comes to judge us. The Fig-tree, that Christ cursed, had

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had leaves good store; but Christ looked for fruits and found none; therefore he cursed it. The form of godliness, that's *in folio*; but the power of godliness, that's *in fructu*.

Fourthly, Secure not thy self *in spe germinis*, in some blossoms and imperfect attempts and beginnings of Piety. Many a tree sends forth hopeful blossoms: But they are soon nipt, never come to maturity. There hath been many an hopeful Spring blasted. *Ου παραπορεύει*, saith our Saviour of some forward Christians, *they bring nothing to perfection*. Good thoughts, holy motions, sudden passionate vows and promises to live holily, to give over a sinful course of life, they have the goodness of a blossom; but if they be not well set, they take not, but come to nothing. Thus the man in the Gospel blossomed fair, when in all the haste he said to Christ, *Master, I'll follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; but one discouraging word turned him off presently. Such also was the young rich man in the Gospel, *Master, What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Here was a specious blossom; but when Christ called for fruit, *Give Alms to the Poor*, presently the blossom was blasted. *Herod* was fairly blossomed at *John's* Preaching, he was much taken with his Sermons, *he heard him gladly*. So was *Agrippa* almost perswaded to become a thorow Christian; but he had a full period at *Almoſt*. *Almoſt*, that's a blossom: Altogether, that's good fruit.

Fifthly, Secure not thy self *in carentia mali fructus*. Oh! I shall be spared, the *Ax* shall not pass upon me, I bring forth no bad fruit, I am no Adulterer, no Extortioner, no Blasphemer, I wrong no man. Mistake not thy self, that Plea will not free thee from the stroke of the *Ax*. Unfruitfulness in goodness is enough to condemn thee. A negative Christian is no good Christian. A Christian is not to be defined by meer Negatives; 'tis no good description of a Christian to say, *A Christian is one that doth violence to none, he is no Oppressour, no usurper of another man's right* (though 'twere well some that would needs be accounted the only good Christians, were but such kind of Christians). No, a Christian must *bring forth good fruit*, he must be filled with the fruits of Righteousness, as St. Paul speaks; *Abounding in every good work*, Col. i. 10. *Full of mercy and good fruits*, James iii. 17. The idle servant did not mis-spend his Lord's Talent; but he did not improve it: He did not diminish it, but he did not encrease it: That was enough to cast and condemn him.

God will endure any man, rather than a Christian, to be unfruitful. A tree growing in the field or forest, 'tis for shade, or firing, or other materials, we expect no fruit from it: But a tree in the Garden must bring forth fruit, or 'tis utterly unprofitable. Hear what God saith, *Ezek. xv. 2. What is the Vine-tree better than the trees of the Forest, if it be unfruitful? Nay, 'tis worse; shall Wood be taken of it to do any work withal? Will men take a pin of it to hang any thing upon it? Behold, saith God, 'tis cast into the fire for fuel, the fire devours both the ends and the midst of it.*

Wouldest thou then bring forth good fruit?

I. Look thou beest implanted into Christ, the root, and stock, and original of all true faithfulness. *John xv. 4. Abide in me, saith Christ, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* Thou must be effectually incorporated into him, not in fashion only, and outward profession. St. *Augustine* observes there are two stocks or trees, from whence man-kind must spring; the one is the first *Adam*, the other is Christ the second *Adam*. First, every man grows out of the first *Adam*, is a branch of that barren Tree: But a Christian must be engrafted into the second *Adam*, united and incorporated into Christ, to make him fruitful. The *Pelagian* could say, That the best of the *Heathen*, they were but *steriliter boni*; all their seeming goodness was no better than barrenness, being out of Christ. Wouldest thou be fruitful?

II. Be sure to draw nourishment and strength from the soil. God's Church is a fat and a fruitful soil; there is a rich moisture of Grace that's abundant in it. *All my fresh Springs are in thee.*

III. Suffer gladly the culture of *Paul*, the waterings of *Apoll's*, make use of their Ministry; that's able to make us fruitful. *Aaron's rod*, laid in the Tabernacle, shall bring forth ripe Almonds. *If my word abide in you, saith Christ, ye shall bring forth much fruit.*

IV. Pate

IV. *Pate. influentiae celi.* Lie upon and be ready to receive the influence of heaven. That's one way to make trees fruitful, open the roots that the Sun may relieve them. The inspirations of Grace, the breathings of God's Spirit, these breed sap and vivacity in us. A tree, all the plantings, and dressings, and waterings are to no purpose, except the Sun doth quicken and enliven it. 'Tis a Rule in Husbandry, *Non tellus, sed annus fructificat*: 'tis not the soil, but the season of the year, that makes things fruitful. The dew of Heaven, the distillations of Grace, those benign influences of God's holy Spirit, from them comes all our spiritual fruitfulness. *Non omnia germinant, quæ plantantur, & rigantur; sed quibus Deus dat incrementum*, Aug. *De gratia Christi*, Cap. xi.

And then in the last place, the fruit we bring forth, it must be *good fruit*: Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, such as the Lord of the soil will take content in. It must not be *Isaiah's wild grapes*, *Isai. v. 2.* nor *Jeremy's naughty Figs*, Chap xxix. 17. not the *Apples of Sodom*, not the *sover grapes of Gomorrah*; their grapes were grapes of Gall, their clusters were bitter, *Deut. xxxii. 32.* but kindly, pleasant, and acceptable fruit.

And that thy fruit may be such good fruit.

1. It must spring and grow from a good tree. Make the tree good, and his fruit good. First, the tree must be good. Ye know what Christ saith, *Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles. How can they that are bad, bring forth that which is good?* "What is the Tree?" saith *Augustine*, that's the person; thy person must be sanctified, ere thy fruit will be accepted. What is the root of that "Tree?" that, saith *Augustine*, is thy heart and will. An holy heart, a rectified will, "a religious bent and frame of the Soul, that's the root of all good fruit. Out of the good treasure of the heart comes all good works. Oh! Keep thine heart with all diligence, from thence proceed the issues of life. Good fruit,

2. It must be proper fruit, fruit according to its kind; that's the fruit, which God expects of thee. *Be fruitful in the works of thy calling*, do good in the place that God hath set thee in. Look well to thine own duty, intrude not thy self into another man's work. Reformation of abuses, 'tis good fruit; but be sure of thy Warrant, or 'tis not good fruit, as it comes from thee. Preaching of the Gospel, 'tis in it self a blessed fruit; but is it a fruit of thy Calling? else thou art a prophane usurper. Here the rule St. Peter gives, *1 Pet. iv. 10. As every man hath received the gift (the gift of Ability, and the gift of Authority) so let him minister the same one to another, as Good Stewards of the manifold graces of God.* Good fruit,

3. It must be seasonable fruit. That's *David's* description of a good Man, *Psal. i. 3. He brings forth his fruit in his season.* Take the opportunities of doing good. *Occasio*, 'tis *Dei nutus*; when God gives the seasonable occasion of a good work, that's God's beckoning to thee; then he expects a good deed from thee. 'Tis St. Paul's Rule, *While we have time, let us do good to all.* The time of life, the time of health, the time of peace; before the evil day come upon thee. *Up and be doing, and the Lord shall be with you.* Our fruit,

4. It must be good in the measure and proportion.

1. It must be good in the proportion of the soil, and in the culture and pains that God hath taken with thee. God hath not planted thee in a barren Wilderness, but *in monte filii Olei*, as *Isaiah* speaks, in his Church, a fat and fruitful hill. Oh, when the ground doth not yield the seed again! So much cost laid on, his favours, his blessings, his instructions, his pruning-knife of fatherly corrections: answerable to these means of Grace must be thy fruitfulness, or it will not be accepted.

2. It must be good fruit in proportion to our age and continuance in the Church of God. Men look not for plenty of fruits from tender plants; but grown Christians must be fruitful Christians. Hear what *David* saith, *Psal. xcii. 13. 14. Those, that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God, they shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.*

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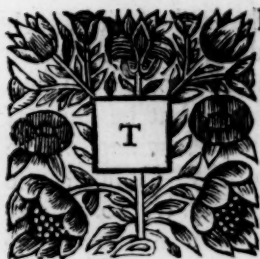
3. It must be good fruit in proportion to our former barrenness. *She that was barren, saith Hannah, hath brought forth seven.* A true penitent must be more abundant in fruits of Piety, *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance.* Every scantling of Piety is not meet for Repentance. 'Tis *Gregorie's* Observation, "There may be fruits *digni innocentia*, which are not *digni penitentia*. God expects more from a penitent sinner, then from him that never fell foully into any gross impiety. Repentance sends us to God, as *Jacob* did his sons the second time into *Egypt*, *Carry double money in your hands.* A penitent sinner must pray more devoutly, walk more humbly, live more industriously and circumspectly, than some other Christians. Such fruits as these are meet for Repentance.



A S E R M O N

On Psalm lxxiii. 28.

But it is good for me to draw near to God.



THE Text, 'tis the Prophet's Victory and Triumph over a great temptation, that had much perplex'd him. The temptation was sharp, and of dangerous consequence; An inclination that arose in his mind, to give over his practice of Religion and Devotion, as a thing merely in vain, not at all regarded, or accepted by God. The Psalmist sets it down in the thirteenth Verse, confesses what desperate thoughts began to rise in his heart; *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.* He could see no profit,

or good success in it.

I call it a Temptation; and it appears to be so by the working of it. There are three motions in the spirit of the Psalmist, which shews it to be no more than the brunt of a Temptation, rather than the natural brood of his own corruption, which he settled upon.

First, He startles at it, and 'tis grievous and vexatious to him, he takes no pleasure or delight in it, he rouses it not under his tongue, and sucks sweetness out of it; but 'tis as gall and bitterness to him, his heart was grieved at it, and *he was pricked in his reins*, Vers. 21. That's one good tryal to discern a temptation from an inbred corruption; if our hearts be troubled at it, startle at it, and take no pleasure in it.

Secondly, As he startles at it, so he struggles with it, and checks it, and strives and reasons against it; *If I say, I will speak thus* (as this temptation suggests) *behold I should offend against the generation of thy children*, Vers. 15. He argues, and disputes with his own heart, he yields not presently, and embraces the motion; but opposes an holy meditation against this wicked and prophane Temptation. That's a second sign, 'twas but a temptation, he closes not with it, but wrestles against it.

Thirdly, He seeks to God for help against it. *He went into the Sanctuary of God*, Vers. 17. sought for help and direction in this perplexity from the Word of God. He consults not with flesh and blood, and carnal reason, but lays hold on the *Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, opposes the *shield of faith* to quench this temptation, and fiery dart of the Devil. The Psalmist doth, as *Rebecca* did, when she felt strugglings in her womb; *If it be so, why am I thus? and she went to enquire*

enquire of the LORD about it, Gen. xxv. 22. That's one sign, that 'tis no wilful uncleanness, but force and ravishment, if a Woman cries out, when her chastity is assaulted, Deut. xxii. 27. When in these conflicts and temptations we seek to God to assist us, to settle our doubts, to establish our conscience, to shew us the right way, 'tis a good argument, that Temptations are our vexations, rather than our sins.

A little to insist upon this temptation, that we may the better understand the Prophet's Victory.

The Motive that brought him into this temptation; the scandal that stumbled him; the scruple that perplexed him; the *σκόλο-ς*, and thorn that galled and vexed his soul, was the consideration of the prosperous estate of wicked men, such as never busied themselves with the thoughts of God, meer strangers to his fear, that gave no regard to walk holily before him: yet he saw, that all things went well with them, they lived in ease and plenty, they met with no crosses or calamities. Surely (thinks the Psalmist) *I am mistaken, there is a nearer way to happiness, than this long and laborious, and tedious way of Religion, I'll even make tryal of their courses.*

And this temptation, it hath assaulted many Saints of God. Holy Job, he suffered this conflict, the prosperity of the wicked stumbled him, Chap. xxi. 6, 7, 8, 9. When he remembred, he was afraid, and trembling took hold upon him; Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, and are mighty in power? their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. The Prophet Jeremy, he laboured also under this temptation, Chap. xii. 1. It makes him to reason and expostulate with God; LORD, saith he, *Let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are they happy that deal very treacherously?* And this bitter weed, it grew rank in Malachi's time, and had tainted the greatest part of the People of God; the Prophet charges them with it, Chap. iii. 14. *Ye have said, 'Tis in vain to serve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinances, and have walked mournfully before him? for now we call the proud happy, and they that work wickedness are set up, yea, they that tempt God are now delivered.* Now surely; a fearful temptation it is, thus to feel grudgings of Atheism, and Profaneness, and to repine at God's dealings with us. And yet we see God's own Children, if left to themselves, may fall into it.

First, That bitter root of Envy, not fully mortified in the Saints, disposes them to it. David felt it, and was fain to chide it in himself, Psal. xxxvii. 1. *Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* To a meer natural man, in whom Envy reigns, another man's happiness is his torment. But even regenerate men have some weft of it sometimes. The whole day's Labourers envied, that the Labourers but one hour in the vineyard should fare as well as they, Mat. xx. The dutiful Son thought much, that the Prodigal Son should be received and feasted, Luke xv. St. James points it out, Chap. iv. 5. *The spirit that is in us, lusteth to envy.*

Secondly, Some remainders of worldly desires are still abiding in them, they are not yet fully crucified to the world, nor the world to them; they are not only *fili*, but *fili sæculi*, Aug. There is some sap of the old stock still continuing in them; they think sometimes God might be more open-handed towards them. As Joseph did with his Father Jacob, they mislike the crossing of his hands, and placing the fuller and more bountiful hand upon the Worldling's head.

Thirdly, This Temptation oft-times ariseth out of a misconceit, that men frame to themselves of God's Providence, in the dispensation of these outward Blessings. They think them *bona Throni*, whereas they are *bona Scabelli*; take the Footstool for the Throne of God. They judge them infallible signs of God's favour, blessings that are entailed and assured to his Children, the portion of his beloved ones, and so are offended to see Poverty and Piety; Prosperity and Profaneness, to go together. Especially the Jews under the Old Testament, were more subject to this temptation. They were less, but we are more to be blamed, if we give way to it. The promises of God, as made to the Jews, ran in the terms of temporal prosperity; *long life*, and *victory*, and *riches*, were the open expressions, by which God engaged himself to them. This made the Pharisees to laugh at Christ, when he

Serm. I. spake against the seeking after worldly wealth, *Luke xvi. 14.* and the Disciples to wonder when Christ said, *How hardly shall a rich man enter into Heaven?* Hence it is, that Christians sometimes judge of their spiritual estate by their outward condition; as *Gideon* answered the Angel; *If the LORD be with us, how is all this evil upon us?*

The *Psalmist* hath been much troubled with these thoughts. He was even at a loss; His feet had well-nigh slept: and all the *Psalm* long, he hath been wrestling with this temptation; and now at last he hath got the victory over it, and shaken it off, and sets up this as his rest, not to listen any more to these suggestions; but, however God deals with him in outward things, yet he is fully resolved to preserve his integrity, to hold on in a constant course of Piety. Here is the upshot, and issue of all his thoughts, *'Tis good for me to draw near to God.*

So then, the words set out the happy issue, that the *Psalmist* hath found out of his temptation; the Victory which he hath got over that evil suggestion; the resolution that he hath fixed to himself, to keep close to God in the practice of Piety: and 'tis a full victory; he hath perfectly discovered his former error, and now sees clearly the contrary truth.

And to a spiritual eye 'tis a spectacle worth the beholding; To see the Saints combating and wrestling with temptations, and triumphing over them; to see them buffeted with these Messengers of Satan, and yet prevailing against them. They may be perplexed, but they shall not be vanquished. They have their wrestlings, and sharp encounters, like *Jacob* with the Angel; but at length they prevail, the success is comfortable. When I said, *My foot slippeth, thy mercies, O LORD, held me up,* *Psalm xciv. 18.* I am sometimes afraid, saith *David*, but yet I put my trust in thee, *Psalm lvi. 3.* What expostulations doth *David* make with God, *Psalm lxxvii. 8, 9.* Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath his anger shut up his tender mercies? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? A sharp encounter, a strong pang of distrust and infidelity: but he overcomes it, *Vers. 10.* I said, it was mine own infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. Thus sometimes his Children, they take down poison; but God gives them strong and sovereign Antidotes. The Viper may fasten upon *St. Paul*, but he shakes it off again. God's Children may have temptations, and murmurings of distrust, and discontent; but they recover out of them. A clear Spring of Water may be troubled, and soiled with mud; but it will purge out the soil, and work it self clear again.

For the words themselves, they are an holy Conclusion, that the *Psalmist* makes quite opposite and contrary to his temptation. The temptation was to draw him from God, that he should give over his piety and integrity, and seek for happiness in other courses. But his conclusion gives a plain contradiction to the temptation. "What? shall I forsake my God, and my Religion? No, no, (saith the *Psalmist*) "far be that from me; 'Tis good for me to draw near to God?"

In them take notice of three Particulars.

First, We will consider the Conclusion it self in general.

Secondly, The strength of it.

Thirdly, The matter, and purpose of it.

First, The Conclusion it self, that I call the *holy Extract*, that the *Psalmist* hath drawn out of this Temptation.

Secondly, Here is the strength of the Conclusion in these words; *But, 'tis good for me.* And this strength will appear in three particulars.

First Here is the strength of a firm Resolution; *'Tis good.*

Secondly, Here is the strength of a full Opposition; *But 'tis good.*

Thirdly, Here is the strength of a close and personal Application; *But 'tis good for me.* And then,

Thirdly, The matter and purpose of the Conclusion is; *To draw near to God.*

Come to the

First particular, the *Extract*, or Conclusion it self. The *Psalmist* hath here fixed upon a Conclusion, which he hath gathered and gained by his Conflict with the Temptation. He hath been sore troubled, and vexed with it; but he hath found this good by it, that now he sees 'tis his only course to keep close to God.

Observe;

Observe; God's children are not only delivered out of their temptations, they have not only an *ἐκπαλιν*, as St. Paul calls it, a way to escape; but they are much lettered and enriched by them; they gain ground by these stumbles; are improved by these assaults; they are more established in Piety by these temptations; they find out some precious truths; they gain some rare experiments of grace and comfort, that without temptation they had not met withall, or not so fully and feelingly as now they do. Bare contemplation is nothing so effectual to acquaint us with God, and the power of his Grace, and the comforts of his Spirit, as tryals by temptations. The Philosopher saith truly, *Expertus certius operatur, quàm Artifex*. Experimental Christians, that have felt the combats of temptations, and found the assistances of grace, know more fully what these things mean, than only those that are notional and Book-Christians. Much good comes by them.

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First, Temptations make us know our selves, our inclinations, our weaknesses, our corruptions, and all that is in our hearts. A Christian oft-times stands in the dark to himself; *Quest. ipse factus sum mihi*, saith *Augustin*. He knew not himself, nor the secret bent of his own heart, but temptations will disclose us to our selves. This course God took with *Hezekiah*, he let him fall into a temptation: 'tis said, *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. There was a secret pride and vanity that lay lurking in his heart, that was discovered by that temptation. *Peter* thought that all that was in him, was good corn, till Satan winnowed him, then he found a great deal of Chaff and Tares, which that temptation discovered.

Secondly, Temptation gives us a sweet experience of God, and his Grace in us, and of the truth of his Word and Promise to us. Faith indeed gives assurance of all these: but Temptation gives experience, and experience will not be born down. That will resist all gain-sayings; *I know I have felt it; in the midst of all the sorrows that were in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul. This poor soul cried, and he answered me*, Psal. xxxiv. 6. *Come, I'll tell you what God hath done for my soul*, Psal. lxxvi. 16. *Paul* glories more of his buffetings by Satan, and his deliverances by God, than of all his miracles; 2 Cor. xii. Such a Christian can say, with *David*, *Thy word is tried to the utmost, and thy servant loveth it*.

The word of the LORD is tried in the fire, saith *David*. We know that many extractions are made by fire; it will dissolve and discover many things, that otherwise could not be found out; 'tis so in the fire of temptation. Temptation, 'tis God's furnace; though the Devil heats it, and blows the coals: Many Truths are found out in those exigences. As *Luther* said well; *Study, Prayer, and Temptation, will make a Divine*. As if he should say, *Study, and Practice, and Sicknes will make a Physician*. We are beholding to the winnowings of Temptations for many precious Truths. As in matters of Doctrine, those Truths that have been most opposed, are best clear'd, and judiciously settled. Herefie, 'tis *Lima veritatis*; Errors and Heresies, they are as files to Truth, and do make it shine more clearly: So, in matters of practice, the furnace of temptations hath sent forth many rare Experiments. The Saints come out of it, as the *Israelites* did from *Pharaoh's* furnace, enriched with Jewels. As sicknesses breed skill in remedies: so temptations will teach us preservatives, restoratives against our spiritual maladies. *Egypt*, saith St. *Augustine*, had not only burdens and vexations; but Jewels of gold and silver, with which the *Hebrews* came out enriched: so temptations have not only spiritual conflicts and perplexities; but they afford us precious experiments of the workings of grace, as the spoils of our victory.

We have seen the first thing, the Issue and Conclusion. But then,

Secondly, I observe this conclusion, 'tis strengthened,

First, With a firm resolution; *'Tis good*. The Psalmist doth not barely say on the sudden, *Ple draw near to God*; but lays down his resolution, fixes his purpose, makes it the final determination of his judgment, resolves with himself; *'Tis good* so to do.

And we will take notice of this holy resolution of the Psalmist,

I. Respectively to his former temptation.

II. We will consider it absolutely in it self.

Bbb 2

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I. Compare it with his temptation, what was that? 'twas to depart from God, to give over his Religion. That was his temptation. What was his resolution? 'Tis to draw near to God.

It must teach us to distinguish, and put a difference betwixt the temptations of a Christian, and his resolutions, and accordingly to judge of a Christian, not by his temptations, but by his resolutions. Judge the *Psalmist* by the estimate of his temptation, and you will think him an Atheist, but consider his resolution, and you will find him a Saint. A Christian may be overtaken with some sudden inclinations and temptations to sin; but he never comes to this height of sinning, as to say, and resolve with himself, 'Tis good to do so. He doth not purposely, and resolutely allow himself in the commission of any known sin; blesses not himself in any wicked way. It was that which comforted *David* in all his infirmities, that he regarded not wickedness in his heart, *Psal. lxi. 18*. He comforts himself in his freedom from that degree of sinning. So in *Psal. xviii.* there he avows his integrity upon this ground, that his resolutions were right; *I have not wickedly departed from my God, Vers. 21. I did not put away his statutes from me, Vers. 22. I kept myself from mine own iniquity, Vers. 23.* However he was surprized with temptations, yet the purpose and bent of his heart went not with them; his resolutions were holy.

1. For those which are properly Satan's temptations (such as Divines call Diabolical) if we accept them not, nor embrace them, they are his sins, they are but our vexations. As the Lawyers say, If one shall plant a tree in another man's ground, if it takes not root, 'tis his that set it there; but, if it takes root, then *cedit solo*, then it belongs to the owner of the soil: So, if Satan tempt us, and we yield not to him, the temptation, 'tis his sin, not ours; but if we let it take root in our hearts, then it becomes our sin, and we must own it, and answer for it; but otherwise not, it is not charged upon us.

2. In our own corrupt inclinations, when we are tempted, and drawn away, and enticed by our lusts, as St. James speaks, if we approve them not, say not, 'Tis good to yield to them; but resolve and strive against them: though they be sins, yet they are infirmities, they alter and overthrow not the state of a Christian; but are consistent with grace and salvation, and God will graciously esteem of us, not according to our temptations, but according to our good purposes, our faithful endeavours, and holy resolutions.

Yet this is a great difference 'twixt a Saint and a profane sinner. A wicked man may have some sudden attempts and suggestions to good; but his resolutions are naught: he judges it good for him to continue his ill courses. On the contrary, a good Christian may suffer some sudden pangs of temptation; as *David* had, *I said in my haste, all men are liars, Samuel*, and all the Prophets: but he chieks himself presently, and recovers, and holds himself to his good resolutions.

In that sin of *numbring the people*, 2 Sam. xiv. if you will look upon *David*, and *Joab* in their sudden motions, you will think *Joab* the Saint, and *David* the great sinner. How was *David* transported with pride and vain glory? He sends out his Commission of Array, he will muster up his forces, only to know them: And then, on the other side, how religiously doth *Joab* speak, and dissuade him from that sin? Here is the difference, *David* was surpriz'd with a temptation, and *Joab* by chance affected with a good motion. *Joab* was suddenly good, but habitually bad; *David*, on the contrary, suddenly bad, but habitually and resolutely good. As we judge of the depth of a River, not when there is a great fall of rain that swells it up; but when it runs only into its own current, by the stream that ariseth from the Spring-head: so we are to estimate a Christian, not by the distempers of a temptation, what he seems then, but by his own sober, and habitual, and constant resolutions.

II. Consider this resolution of the *Psalmist*, absolutely in it self; he resolves, 'Tis good to draw near to God. He lays it down as a Principle and Maxim, works it into his understanding, convinces his judgment, fixes it deeply in his heart; I resolve, 'Tis good.

Observe, "He that means to be a through-Christian, and to serve God to some purpose,

purpose, must lay down grounds and resolutions for it, and set the bent, and byas, and purpose of his heart strongly upon it. Thus the Saints in Scripture have resolved themselves for the service of God; *David's Dixi custodiam*, Psal. xxxix. 1. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed*; Psal. lvii. 7. *David avows himself his servant*, Psal. cxvi. 16. *Behold, LORD, I am thy servant, I am thy servant*. He calls himself one that is devoted to his fear. And again, *Psal. cxix. I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed to keep thy commandments*. 'Twas that which Barnabas commended to the Converts in Antioch, Acts xi. 23. *He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*.

Sudden flashes, and extempore motions to good, many find in themselves, as Balaam, and Agrippa; they will in all haste become religious; but they want this root of Piety, a firm resolution; they have not wrought their hearts to this conclusion, *'Tis good for me to be religious*.

The possessing of our souls and judgments with these resolutions in point of Christianity, 'tis of great use and avail to us in the course of Piety.

1. This thought wrought to a resolution, when we give it the authority of a Principle, it will have a powerful command upon the whole soul, to set it on working. Let thy judgment, out of through deliberation, say to thee, *'Tis good for me to be religious*, thy will, and thy affections will forth-with yield and embrace it. As we see in other resolutions; thou resolvest to be rich, how doth it set the whole man on work? 'twill employ thy thoughts, thy care, all thy endeavours; all the powers of soul and body will yield obedience to this commanding resolution.

2. These holy purposes and resolutions make our services far more acceptable and pleasing unto God. Who regards such servants, that are good only by fits and starts? to day they will serve us, to morrow they will be gone. But when we become such servants to God, as the Law speaks of, such an one, as saith, *I love my Master, I'll not go from him*, Exod. xxi. 5. that desires to have his ear bored, that he may serve him for ever; such a servant God sets much by. See how God enquires after such a servant, *Jer. xxx. 21. Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?* God accounts such a servant worth the entertaining.

3. These purposes and resolutions to be religious, when they are in their strength, will admit of no contradiction. There is no reasoning or disputing against Principles and Maxims. There is no question of *prima principia*, or *ultimus finis*. Sudden imperfect notions may be laid aside, and given over by contrary persuasions; but, when our hearts are fixed upon these holy purposes, they will sling off, and resist all contrary solicitations.

(1.) These Resolutions they will settle and establish the fickleness and slipperiness of our hearts, and breed constancy in us. Without them our hearts are exceeding various and changeable, will soon start aside, tire, and give over. But these Resolutions they do *immobilizare cor*, they make us immoveable, firm, and constant in the practice of Piety. These holy and firm Resolutions against sinful temptations, St. Peter calls spiritual armour, 1 Pet. iv. 1. *ὁπλισαμεθα, Arm yourselves with this mind, to cease from sin*.

(2.) Where these Resolutions bear sway, they discourage, and dishearten Satan's Temptations; he hath small hope to seduce and mislead a resolved Christian. Indeed, loose and unengaged men that can say, like them in the Gospel, *No man hath hired us*, they are every man's money, ready to be entertained and employed by any new Master; *Sed alienum servum nē Nero manumiserit*. He that hath already hired himself out, bound himself to serve his Master, there is no enticing of him, he hath engaged himself already to another service. A resolved Christian hath taken Earnest, and Prefs-money of God, bound himself to his service. The Devil hath small hopes to prevail with such a Christian. Such an one saith, as St. Paul tells us, *We are not our own, we are hired, yea, bought with a price*, we must not be the servants of sin and Satan.

That's the first strength of the Conclusion, a full resolution; *'Tis good for us*.

Secondly, Here is another strength of the Conclusion, it is made with a full opposition; *But it is good*. But, it is an adverbative Particle, it turns our backs upon all

Serm. I. all other courses, rejecting and opposing it self against all other ways and courses in the World. See this opposition in *David, I held straight to thy Commandments, and all false ways I utterly abhor*, Psal. cxix. 28. The Psalmist considers the several ways of the sons of men, ponders their paths, and all things considered, he opposes this holy purpose to all their pursuits; *Let them run a madding after other things, but 'tis good for me to draw near to God.*

Observe, *A right-bred Christian, though all the world should forsake God, yet he will keep close to him.* The Psalmist considers the men of this world with all their advantages.

I. He considers their number, they are many; all the people fall to them, *Vers. 10.*

II. He considers their prosperity, they prosper in the world, they increase in riches, all succeeds well with them, *they have more than heart can wish*, *Vers. 7.* And,

III. He considers their power and strength to do hurt, and mischief, they are full of violence and oppression, *They speak wickedly concerning oppression*, *Vers. 8.* 'Tis ill crossing them, or dissenting from them. Well, the Psalmist yields them all these advantages; Let them have the multitude, I will chuse Piety with Paucity; Let them have abundance, give me Piety with Poverty; Let them oppress, and offer violence, I will embrace Piety, even with persecution. He, that can make this choice, refuse wickedness with all her advantages, and embrace Piety with all her disadvantages and discouragements, he hath a strong evidence that he is a good Christian.

This choice and embracing of Religion with this opposition to the worldling's advantageous condition, it argues and demonstrates three excellencies in thy Piety.

1. It argues the truth and sincerity of thy Piety, that thou cleavest to God for himself, and not upon by-respects, or sinister aims, or worldly inducements. When Prosperity and Piety go both together, 'tis hardly known to which of them thou addicest thy self. As when two friends walk together, 'tis not so well discerned to whom they belong that follow after them, and wait upon them; but when the Masters part, then we know to whom the Servant belongs, to him whom he follows, when the other leaves him: so, when Piety and Prosperity part, and go several ways, then, if thou cleavest to Piety, and lettest go Prosperity, 'tis a good sign, thou art a faithful servant to God and Religion.

2. This choice of Religion, even with opposition to the multitude of the world, argues the strength of thy Religion, that it is well-grounded, and upon a sure foundation, that we build our house upon the Rock, and not set up a Shed, or a lean-to to another man's house. It shews, that we are not carried with a multitude; but are able to go alone in a good way. It argues, that we see with our own eyes some excellency in Religion, that we do find that in God, that countervails; nay, exceeds all, that is in the world. They that take up Religion upon trust and conformity to others, they make Religion but a fashion, not a matter of devotion; they are like Children that cannot go alone, but must be led, or carried by the help of others.

3. This resolution to be religious even with opposition to all the advantages of the world, it will argue constancy and perseverance in the course of Piety. Dost thou consider with thy self, if I be religious, I am like to go alone (the men of the world, they are of another gang) to differ from the world, and to depart from them; and more than so, I may be brought to want and poverty by my Religion; the wealth of the world runs another way; nay, which is worst, I am like to undergo violence and oppression, to suffer persecution for my Religion, and yet all these fore-laid and considered, yet thou resolvest to be religious. Thou hast counted the cost as Christ bids thee, *Luke xiv. 28.* forecast the worst; sure, when these evils come upon thee, thou wilt not say, thou art mistaken: 'Tis no other than I looked for, the Cross is no scandal to me; I took upon me the practice of Religion, and the service of God upon these terms; I'll not give it over, though these things befall me. *Nudum Christum nudus sequar.* Judas, he followed Christ upon hopes of worldly gain and preferment, dreamed of an earthly

earthly Kingdom ; when he saw his hopes went backwards, persecution began to arise, and all the people took against Christ, he saw he was mistaken, and gave over presently. But *Paul* had otherwise learned Christ. When the Prophet *Agabus* foretold him of persecution, he was not startled at it, 'twas no more than he looked for; he knew right-well, that *bonds and afflictions did abide him*; and so gave not over, but held out constantly.

That's the second strength of the Conclusion, a full opposition. There is yet, *Thirdly*, A third strength of this holy Conclusion, that's a particular close Application to himself, *'Tis good for me*. The temptation that troubled him, was in part general, a condemning of the generation of God's children, as if they had been a forlorn people; and he over-masters this temptation in *Verf. 1. Tet God is good to Israel*; but he rests not there, but brings it home to himself, *It is good for me*. This temptation cast the *Psalmist* into a spiritual swoon; and here are two degrees of his reviving: as it was with the *Shunamite's* dead child, that was raised by *Elisba*.

I. He breaks forth into this general resolution; *Tet God is good to Israel*: that's *sternutatio fidei*, the needling of the dead child, when life began in him; but then,

II. He proceeds to his own personal resolutions; *'Tis good for me*: here is *aperitio oculorum fidei*, his eye-sight clearly restored to him, he is perfectly recovered.

There is a great difference 'twixt these two resolutions, *Tet God is good to Israel*, and this, *'Tis good for me to draw near to God*; *Bonum est Israeli, & bonum est mihi*. Many a man will yield to the first, confess *God is good to Israel*, that cannot work his heart to say, *'Tis good for me to be a true Israelite, and to draw near to God*. We may be sound Catholics, and yet bad Christians. We can easily approve Piety in the general, say, *'Tis good to be religious, not to oppress, or defraud, or slander, or malign*; but when we come to *judicium practicum, & ultimum dictamen*, to our own case; *hic, and nunc*; to say, and resolve, "*'Tis good for me to abstain from this sin, when present temptation assaults me; when Satan brings up the gain to my hand, Do this unjust action, and thou shalt gain by it; pursue this unlawful course, thou shalt prosper in it; allow thy self the commission of this sin, thou mayest do well enough for all it; then to recollect thy resolutions, to bid defiance to a present temptation with this holy resolution. 'Tis good for me to abstain from this evil, then thou art come to a good pitch of Piety.*

Saint Paul notes this difference, *Rom. ii.* tells us, a man may approve the things that are excellent, and yet never embrace them himself, or practise them; say, that a man should not do thus, or thus, and yet do so himself; commend those that are religious, and yet not imitate them. As *Acts v. 13.* the people highly esteemed the Christians, but yet would not become Christians themselves; the people magnified them, but yet would not joyn themselves to them. Nay, *Naaman* the Syrian's conversion was better; he doth not only make a general profession; *I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel*; but comes to personal resolution, *From henceforth I will offer neither burnt-offerings, nor sacrifice unto other Gods; but unto the LORD*, *2 Kings v. 17.* addicts himself to his service and worship. I, that's a good Christian's resolution, which the *Psalmist* makes, *Psal. xlviii. 14. This God is our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide unto death.*

The last thing remains,

Thirdly, The matter and purpose of the Conclusion; 'tis to draw near to God. 'Tis a full and important Speech, as large and comprehensive, as that of *Solomon*, *Ecclef. xii. 13. Let's bear the sum of all*; and again, 'tis *totum hominis*, 'tis the whole duty of man.

And this drawing near to God, it gives check to three sorts of men.

First, It reproves *Demas* his back-sliding, and forsaking Religion. Such were those Disciples *St. John* speaks of, that took a tetch at Christ's doctrine; 'tis said, *They went back, and walked no more with him*, *John vi. 66.*

Secondly, It checks the *Laodicean* luke-warm, or those stunted Christians: If they be a little entred into Religion, 'tis enough, no need of progress, or proceeding.

Thirdly, It will mend *St. Peter's* pace, and such as he is. Though he moved towards Christ, yet 'tis said, he followed Christ afar off, kept his distance, there may be danger in coming too near him.

We

Serm. I.

We will resolve this approaching and drawing near to God, into three gradations.

I. There is *proximitas professionis*, a nearness of profession; when we take upon us the holy Profession of being his Servants. Profaneness sets us far from God; but the Profession of Religion brings us near him. Thus the People of *Israel* are called a People *near unto him*, *Psal. cxlviii. 14*. And amongst the *Israelites*, the Tribe of *Levi*, that had a more immediate attendance upon him, are said to be near him, *Numb. xvi. 9*. Seems it a small thing unto you, that the God of *Israel* hath separated you from the Congregation of *Israel*, to bring you near to himself? Thus Christianity brings us near to God. You that were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of *Christ*, *Ephes. ii. 13*. So then, that's the first degree of the *Psalmist's* Resolution, not to cast off the Service of his God; but to adhere to it, to consecrate himself to that holy Profession. *Isaiah* describes it, *Chap. xlv. 5*. One shall say, I am the *LORD's*, another shall call himself by the Name of *Jacob*, and another shall subscribe with his hands unto the *LORD*; *Ἐμψέλεν τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ, τὸ θεῖον ὄνομα*. so the *Septuagint*; He shall write it upon his hand, I am the *LORD's*; as Soldiers were wont to have the Name of their General painted and pounced into the Flesh of their hand. Or, as *S. John* expresses it, *Rev. xxii. 4*. His Name shall be in their foreheads. *Moses* sets it out very emphatically, calls this an avouching of God to be our God, *Deut. xxvi. 17*. Or, as the Prophet *Micah* terms it, a walking in the Name of God, *Mic. iv. 5*. All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of the *LORD* our God for ever and ever. That's the first, a nearness of Profession.

II. There is another degree of approach, that's *proximitas cultus*, nearness of Adoration; an approaching to him in the solemn Duties and Addresses of Worship and Invocation. A good Christian is always near God in all his Conversation; but Prayer and Worship brings us nearer to him. Christians are always in his House and Family; but the Duties of Religious Worship bring us into the Chamber of Presence: we then approach to his Throne, we fall down before his Footstool. Christians, like *Martha*, serve *Christ* in all their Employments; but in his immediate Worship, like *Mary*, we sit at his Feet. As *Hester* was near the King, while she lived in his Royal Palace; but when she came into the inner Court, and bowed her self, and touch'd the top of his Scepter, and made her Petition to him, then in a special manner she drew nigh to him. God is nigh unto them that call upon him faithfully, *Psal. cxlv. 18*.

III. There is yet a closer approach, that's the nearness of fervent and ardent Devotion. This nearness betokens in our holy Performances much intention and strength of Devotion. Religion brings us into his presence; but earnest Devotion brings us close unto him, when we perform all our Services *actu intensivo*, with ardency of affection. *S. Paul* joyns both these together, *Fervent in spirit, serving the LORD*, *Rom. xii. 11*. Ordinary Piety affords us *scalas ad ascendendum*, we climb up by that Ladder; but fervency of Devotion affords us *alas ad volandum*, it gives our Prayers the Wings of an Eagle, nay, the six Wings of a Seraphim. Feeble Prayers are but *saltus Cicadæ*; but fervent Prayers are *volatus Aquilæ*: those like the Motion of the Grasshopper, these as the Mountings and Soarings of the Eagle. While common Christians stay and worship at the foot of the Mountain, Devotion, like *Moses*, enters into the thick Cloud, to God's more immediate Presence. The Scripture calls this, *To take delight in approaching to God*, *Isa. lviii. 2*. not to content himself to wait upon God at a distance, but to be immediately about him; not only to be his menial servants, always in his House, but to be *interioris admissionis servi*, to have access to his Person and Presence. Indeed, a Christian, till he be in Heaven, never thinks himself near enough to God; he is still moving towards him, panting out his Longings with *David*, *Oh! when shall I appear before the presence of God?* *Psal. xlii. 2*. Here, neither *Christ* doth sufficiently enjoy a Christian, nor a Christian him. Still he calls for nearer admission; *Open unto me, my love, my dove*, saith *Christ*, *Cant. v. 2*. And still the Spouse begs nearer access to him; *Draw me unto thee, and I will run after thee*, *Cant. i. 4*. She is never satisfied, till she enjoys his Embracings for ever in Heaven.

Here,

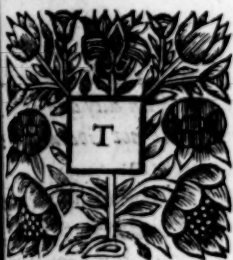
Here, in the Sacrament we are fed *farfare Sacramenti*, as Bernard: But in Heaven *Serm. I.*
 we shall be fed *adipe frumenti*, with the fatness of his house. The Sacrament, that's
viaticum, our refreshing in our journey; in Heaven, that's *convivium*. The Sa-
 crament is *cenaculum sponsi*, the Guest-chamber: But Heaven is *thalamus sponsi*,
 where the Soul embraces him, whom she loves and longs for.

S E R M O N

On St. Luke xviii. 7, 8.

And shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto
 him, though he bear long with them?

I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily



HERE is no one Duty in Christianity, the practice of
 which our Saviour presses upon us more frequently than the
 duty of Prayer. In the Gospel, he often stirs us up to it, and
 to many holy qualifications of it:

First, To *Humility* in Prayer, in the Parable or story of
 the *Pharisee* and the *Publican*.

Secondly, To *Confidence* in Prayer, in the similitude of a
 Child craving food from his Father.

Thirdly, To *Charity* in Prayer: *When you pray, forgive*
Matth. xi. 25.

Fourthly, To an *holy Earnestness*, and *unwearied Importunity* in Prayer in this
 Chapter, *καὶ ἰκκαλῶν*, that we should not languish and grow weary of Prayer.

The Text then, 'tis an exhortation to Prayer, to importunity in Prayer, to im-
 portunity in Prayer upon a special case, and that's the case of suffering wrong and
 oppression. And the Text encourageth to this importunity, shewing the prevalency
 of earnest and importunate Prayer, by a gracious promise that is assured to it.

And this assurance is made to us not only by a bare promise, though that be
 much (Faith, when it meets with a promise from God, will soon grow confident)
 but this assurance is confirmed by strength of Reason, and proof of Argument.
 And the Argument is drawn *à comparatis*, from a comparison taken from an unjust
 Judge of a City, one that regarded not the sufferings of an oppressed poor Widow;
 but yet being wearied with her clamours, and importunity, did at last do her right,
 and avenge her of her enemy. And then our Saviour argues *à minori ad majus*;
 from that which is more unlikely and improbable, to that which is upon many rea-
 sons more hopeful and certain. Shall importunity of clamour prevail for justice
 with a prophane and unrighteous Judge? and shall not the fervent prayers of
 God's Church and Children mightily prevail for their deliverance with our righte-
 ous God? Surely, not only Faith and Piety, but natural reason and common sense
 will yield to this argument, and be convinced by it.

So then the Text, 'tis the inference and conclusion which our Saviour gathers
 from the former comparison, and 'tis thus: *An unrighteous and graceless Judge was*
overcome by Prayers: Therefore our righteous and gracious God will much more yield to
them, and be intreated by them. And in it take notice of three particulars, by which
 this Conclusion is laid down.

First, Here is a gracious Assertion; *Shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry*
day and night unto him?

Secondly, Here is a seasonable prevention of an intervening Objection; that's in
 these words, *Though he bear long with them.*

C c c

Thirdly,

Serm. I. Thirdly, Here is a strong confirmation and improvment of the Conclusion: *I tell you, he will avenge them speedily.*

And this conclusion, 'tis not laid down positively by way of Affirmation: it runs not thus, *God will avenge his own Elect*: but by way of Question and Interrogation, and that's of greater evidence, of stronger assurance; *Shall not God avenge them*? Is it possible, or likely, that he shall reject their prayers, and not avenge them? He puts it to their own impartial judgments, whether they can imagine he should neglect them. And yet, because sentence is not presently executed, but God forbears for a time, infidelity therefore may deny the truth of it. *Incredibile videtur, sed incredulis.* It may seem incredible to those that are incredulous. And then, because these delays of God's justice may often perplex and stagger the Faith of God's children (*I said in my haste, saith David, all men are liars, all these promises of deliverance are but delusions*) therefore Christ will not trust them with the Answer to this Question, but makes it himself: As Paul did with Agrippa, *Dost thou believe? I know thou believest*: So Christ here anticipates the doubtfulness of our Faith, and gives a firm and full Answer to this Question himself: *Shall not God avenge? Yes, I tell you, he will avenge them speedily.*

Come we to the

First Particular, The Assertion, *Shall not God avenge his own Elect, that cry day and night unto him*? And herein we have,

First, The Person of the Judge; *God.*

Secondly, The Act of Justice; *Avenge.*

Thirdly, The Parties wronged, whom God will right and relieve; *His own Elect.*

Fourthly, The exigence, upon which he will do it; *That cry unto him day and night.*

First, Here is the Person of the Judge, and that's God. *And shall not God avenge?* And the Inference is strong upon three advantages in the comparison.

I. The Judge in the comparison was an unjust Judge, *verse 6.* Did the unjust Judge relieve the oppressed? How much more shall God, the just and righteous Judge, avenge his People! Men, the best of men, may fail in point of Justice; but God is unquestionably a righteous Judge. Justice and Righteousness are near and dear unto him. He dwells with Justice: *Justice and Judgment are the Habitations of his Throne, Psal. lxxxix. 14.* He is clothed with Justice; *He puts on the Garments of Vengeance for cloathing, and is clad with zeal as with a cloak, Isai. lix. 17.* More than so, he is armed with Justice; *He hath put on righteousness as a Breast-plate, and an Helmet of salvation upon his head, verse 17.* Nay, he is Justice it self. Justice in God is no good quality, that may be got and lost again, but it is his very Nature and Essence. Deny him to be Just, and ye deny him to be God. That which is just by participation only, is nothing to that which is just by nature. As Light in the Air, 'tis but derived from another Light: but light in the Sun is the Fountain of Light. The Air may be darkened and lose his Light, but the Sun cannot. Men are righteous but by Derivation only, but God is the *Sun of righteousness*, and the Fountain of it. That's the first advantage; If an unjust Judge did relieve the oppressed, much more will a just God do it.

II. The Judge in the Context was an inferiour subordinate Judge; but a City Magistrate, *verse 2.* of no greater Jurisdiction; much like the Centurion in the Gospel; though a Commander, yet he himself was under Authority. Had he denied Justice to this poor Widow, there had lain an Appeal from him to a superiour Judge, the case had not been so desperate and forlorn. But God is the supreme Judge, to whom all Appeals are made. He is the Judge of Judges. That's the second advantage of greater assurance. Justice more concerns the supreme Judge than inferiour Officers and Ministers of Justice. These do not their own work, but the work of him that employs them. As *Jehoshaphat* tells the Judges of the Land *2 Chron. xix. 6.* *Ye judge not for men, but for the Lord.* 'Tis his business, to him belongs righteousness. Injustice in inferiour Judges, 'tis an iniquity. But what faith *Solomon*? *'Tis an abomination to Kings to do wickedly, for the Throne is established by righteousness.* Surely oppression is an abomination to God, he will avenge it. Two

Abraham's Plea with God, Shall not the Judge of all the World do righteously

And St. Paul makes it a matter of Horreur and Blasphemy, that God should be thought not to do Justice. *Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance; God forbid; for then how shall God judge the World?* Rom. iii. 5. No, he lays down this for an undoubted Conclusion, *We are sure the Judgment of God is according unto Truth,* Rom. ii. 2.

Serm. I.

Here is the comfort of God's children, though the petty Judges and Justices of the world slight and neglect them; nay, more than so, wrong and oppress them, yet they have a Supreme and Sovereign Judge, to whom they may appeal, and he will certainly right them. 'Twas *David's* case, it seems all the people rose against him and wronged him: Well, mark to whom he commits his cause, *Psal. xliii. 1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly Nation.* When it comes to that case, which *Solomon* speaks of, *Eccles. iv. 1. I considered all the oppressions that were done under the Sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comfort; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.* Well, let them not be dismayed, God is a Comforter and an Avenger. Though God hath committed the execution of Justice to his subordinate Delegates: yet there are certain Prerogative Cases reserved to himself. I will name three of them:

1. *Quando vindex non vindicat*, when they whom God hath authorized to be Ministers of Justice, are careless, and neglect to do it. Such *Gallio's* there be that can see and suffer the oppression of others, and care not for it. As *Julian* and the Heathen Judges would scoff at the poor Christians complaints, and tell them in derision, *They must turn the other cheek, and suffer patiently.* *Solomon* tells us there lies an Appeal to God in this Case, *Eccles. v. 8. If thou seekest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment in a Province, that there is no relief in a whole Province to be obtained, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest, regardeth, and there be higher than they.* That's a Prerogative Case; They that are not tried at the Petty Sessions, shall not escape the tryal of the Grand Assizes. Another Case is,

2. *Quando vindex opprimit*, when they that should avenge them, are they that wrong them. That's the Case that *Isaiah* speaks of, *Chap. v. 7. I looked for judgment, and behold, oppression; for righteousness, and behold, a cry! Their Princes are roaring Lions, their Judges are evening Wolves,* *Zeph. iii. 3.* But here is the redress, *vers. 5. the just LORD is in the midst thereof, he will do no iniquity, he will bring his judgment to light, he faileth not.* Supreme Powers are not to be affronted by their Inferiours, *Tui sunt imperio suo.* Well, here is our comfort, they that have no earthly power over them, yet are obnoxious to God's Tribunal, yet they must hold up their hands at God's Bar. *Solomon* puts this case likewise, *Eccles. iii. 16. I saw under the Sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.* (That's a sad Case, when they that should be Avengers, are themselves Oppressors). Well, what saith *Solomon*? what remedy hath he found out? *I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.* He shall call the best, and the biggest of them to an account; He can break the great teeth of these Lions, he can make them melt away as Snails; the fiercest Lions are in his hands like the slimy Snail, *Psal. lviii. 8.* There is yet a third Prerogative Case;

3. *Quando ipsi vindices opprimuntur*, when they that are appointed to be God's Avengers, are themselves oppressed and made to be sufferers. There hath been such wickedness under the Sun. *David* complains not only of the sons of *Zeriah*, that they were too bold, and over-bearing; but he met with sons of *Belial*, *Abshaloms*, and *Achitophels*, and *Shebas*, and *Shimeis*, enemies that were too strong for him, that prevented him in the day of his calamity. Read the eighteenth, and the hundred and eighteenth *Psalms*, and you shall find this case fully exemplified. He was so handled by them, as if he had not been anointed with oyl. Well, this is a Prerogative Case: God will take this into his own hand, and will avenge them. 'Twas *Hezekiah's* prayer, though upon another occasion, *O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me,* *Isai. xxxviii. 14.* How severely did *David* avenge the villany offered to his

Serm. I. Agents and Embassadors; and shall not God avenge his Deputies and Substitutes when they are wronged? That's the second advantage; If an inferiour Judge did rescue, how much more shall the Supreme Judge avenge and right them?

III. The Judge in this Chapter was an hard-hearted, merciless, incompassionate Judge, he had no pity on a poor distressed Widow. He avenged her not *justitiâ ductus, sed tædio victus*, Aug. in *Psal. lxxviii*. But God is a gracious, a compassionate Judge. He hath bowels of pity. He is the helper of the helpless. That's a third advantage of Assurance, that our complaints shall prevail with him. 'Tis a joy to the just to do judgment, saith Solomon, *Prov. xxi. 15*. Much more doth God delight in righting the cause of his afflicted servants. Thus David describes him, *Psal. lxxii. 14. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight*. If Saul, when he came to be a Judge and a Ruler, could say, *What ails the People that they weep?* *1 Sam. xi. 5*. he was affected with the tears of his distressed Subjects; how much more doth God compassionate the sorrows and sufferings of his People? *He will not hold his peace at their tears*, as David prays, *Psal. xxxix. 12*. This comforted David when he was persecuted, *Psal. lii. 1. Why boastest thou thy self, O thou mighty man, that thou canst do mischief? the goodness of God endures yet daily*. His goodness shall rescue him from their wickedness. He forewarns the Israelites from cruelty and oppression upon this ground: *When the oppressed cries unto me, I will hear; for I am gracious*, *Exod. xx. 27. Tantum de Judice*.

Secondly, Come we to the Act of Justice, 'tis called an *Avenging*; and that's an act of rescue and relief; that's the Mercy that is here promised. Take it in a three-fold notion:

I. 'Tis not an act of prevention, but of Subvention. He doth not say, "Shall not the Lord preserve his People from the oppressions of violent men, keep them out of trouble, restrain the malice of their enemies, that they shall not annoy them?" No, we have no such promise of exemption from troubles and afflictions. *Et nemo sibi promittat, quod Evangelium non promittit*. We must look for troubles and hard measure from the world, 'tis our portion, and we must submit to it. Christ tells us so, *John xvi. 33. in the world ye shall have tribulations; yea, much tribulation. We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Acts xiv. 22*. The followers of a crucified Saviour must bear the Cross. But here is our comfort; though God will not keep us from trouble, yet he will be with us in trouble, and in his good time, he will bring us out of trouble. His thoughts towards us will be *thoughts of peace, to give us an unexpected end*, *Jer. xxix. 11*. That's the first notion of this Act, 'tis an act of relief out of trouble, not of prevention.

II. He will avenge them, 'tis a word of rescue and deliverance, 'tis not a promise of victory and triumph over those that persecute them. He doth not say, *They shall over-master them that have oppressed them, and keep them under*: but here is our hope for this life, and 'tis well with us that 'tis so much, *The Rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous*, *Psal. cxxv. 3*. but God will remove it. 'Twas the matter of David's thankfulness, *Psal. xxx. 1. Thou hast not made my foes to rejoyce over me*. And so again, *Psal. xli. 11. By this I know thou favourest me, that mine enemies do not triumph over me*. That's favour and mercy that our enemies have not their will upon us; that God breaks off their yoke from our necks, that he limits and restrains their malice, and puts an end to it. 'Twas that comfort which God gives to Baruch, *Jer. xlv. 5. Seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not, but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey*. So Jeremy acknowledgeth, *'Tis the tender mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed*; but have a tolerable subsistence. 'Tis a fair favour for strangers and travellers (and such as are God's People in this world) that they may have redresses of wrongs, and injuries; they must not look for dominion and command over them that wrong them. The Churches triumph over her enemies is reserved to another day, *Then we shall set our feet on the necks of our oppressors; then the righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning*. But in this life, rescue and deliverance is a Christian's portion.

on. Let others dream of a Kingdom in this World, and of the Saints bearing rule over their enemies, 'tis enough if he gives us here rest from the day of adversity, *Psal. xciv.* He promises us safety, not triumph and victory, *Psal. xii. 5.* For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD, I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him. That's the second Notion; Safety, but not Victory.

III. This Act of Avenging, 'tis an act of *Recompense*, and of distributive Justice. And it looks two ways; first upon the Parties that do the wrong, and also upon the Parties that suffer wrong. In both it implies an act of Compensation: To him that doth wrong, *rependet malum pro malo*, *Colos. iii. 25.* He that hath done hurt, he shall suffer hurt: and to him that suffers wrong, *rependet bonum pro malo*, he returns him good for the evil he hath undergone. Here is both *ἀνταποδοσις*, as St. Paul speaks, relaxation to one, and tribulation to the other. The Apostle joyns them both together, *2 Theff. i. 6.* 'Tis a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us. Here Paul expresses both these acts; both *vindicte*, the relieving of his servants; and *vindictæ*, the repaying of their enemies. He that hath done wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done, *Col. iii. 25.*

Moses ascribes both these to God, *Deut. xxxii. 43.* He will avenge the blood of his servants, and render vengeance unto his adversaries, and will be merciful to his Land, and to his People. Jeremy calls him the God of recompenses, that will surely requite, *Chap. li. 56.* God's Justice, 'tis like the fire of Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; it burnt the bonds with which the three Worthies were bound, and it consumed the bodies of them that cast them in. He will plead the cause of his People, he will take the cup of trembling out of their hands, and put it into the hand of them that afflicted them, *Isai. li. 22, 23.* That speech of the same Prophet deserves our attention and meditation, *Chap. lxvi. 5.* Your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Names sake, said, the LORD be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Your Brethren, not aliens and strangers; a sad thing for such to be our oppressors! My Mothers Children were angry with me, *Cant. i. 6.* They are *fili Matris*, but not *fili Patris mei*, saith Bernard. The Church may own them, but God will disclaim them. They have cast you out, *usque ad exterminationem*, left no place for them. They say, let God be glorified. See how religious these oppressors were! Well, let them hear their doom: God will appear to your joy, but they shall be ashamed. Here is the issue of God's avenging; The righteous shall be delivered out of trouble, and the wicked shall come in his stead, *Prov. xi. 8.* *Tantum de actu, avenge.*

Thirdly, There remain two things to be considered.

I. The Parties whom God will succour and relieve; they are his own Elect. And then,

II. The Exigence, upon which he will do it, *That cry unto him day and night.* And these two imply two Motives, by which God is graciously inclined to avenge and relieve them.

I. The first is that which Logicians call *causa προσηύμενα*, that's a motive from within him; that's his Free Grace of Election.

II. The second Motive is that which they call *causa προκαταρτισθη*, an inducement from without him, and that is their Earnest and Importunate prayer; their crying unto him day and night.

I. They are his Elect and chosen Ones; and here is a fourth advantage and improvement of the Argument. The Party wronged in the comparison was a poor Widow, a stranger, unknown, and unregarded of the unrighteous Judge; but those whom God will avenge are near and dear unto him, precious in his eyes, his chosen People, his own elect ones; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye.

And they are expressed here with a very significant Emphasis. He calls them his own Elect. And 'tis an expression,

1. In opposition to what the World accounts of them. God's People they are *mundo*

Serm. I. *mundo rejectanei*, the world esteems them vile and despicable men, the off-scouring of all things. Well, here is their comfort, they are rejected of men, but chosen of God: the World makes them Vessels of misery, but God hath appointed them to be Vessels of mercy: to the world they are Vessels of dishonour, but to God they are Vessels of honour. The Church, 'tis *vidua mundo*, a poor helpless Widow in the worlds esteem; but 'tis *Sponsa Christi*, the Spouse of Christ, dearly beloved of him; *disallowed of men, but chosen of God, and precious*; as St. Peter speaks. And then he calls them *his own Elect*, 'tis a Speech,

2. Of much affection; 'tis a word of endearment and great tenderness. Elect, that's the designation of his love; His own Elect, that's the embracing of his love. The more the world rejects them, the more doth God own them. The Church is never so dear to God, as when 'tis most maligned and persecuted by men; *I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction*, *Isai. xlviii. 10.*

So then here is both the original Motive that stirs up his avenge, 'tis his Election; and then here are the persons whom he will avenge, and they are his Elect ones. *He is jealous for Sion with a great jealousy*; *He is jealous for her with great fury*, *Zech. viii. 2.* His love it stirs up his jealousy, his jealousy that stirs up his fury against their enemies. As they say in Philosophy, that *The concupiscible faculty of our soul, sets the irascible on work*: so God's love to his Children quickens and incenses his wrath against their enemies. *Nemo lædat quos ego suscipio, nemo spoliæ quos ego defendo.* Let them hurt them that dare, seeing he hath chosen them.

And then it points out the Persons, and shews whose wrongs and oppressions God doth especially lay to heart. They are the sufferings of his own Elect ones, his Church, and Children. Not but that God will avenge injustice done even to wicked men. He is so just a Judge, that the unjust sufferings of ungodly men shall be by him avenged. There is a conceit in the world, that if a man be wicked (and 'tis easie for some to account others wicked) such they think may be wronged and oppressed; yea, 'tis thought a point of Piety and zeal to spoil and oppress them. Nay, verily, God beholds such oppressions and wrongs, and will call their Oppressours to a reckoning for it. This practice (when time was) cost the people of God full dear. *Saul* would needs destroy the *Gibeonites* that were *Canaanites*, in zeal to the Children of *Israel*, *2 Sam. xxi.* 'Twas a specious pretence. What? shall *Gibeonites* be fellow-heirs with *Israelites*? Well, that fact of *Saul* brought a Famine in *David's* time of three years continuance. It made *David* himself to supplicate to the *Gibeonites*, that they might *bless the Inheritance of the LORD*, and intercede with God to remove that plague from them. A sad case it was, that *Cham's posterity* must come to blest the *posterity* of *Sem*: that *Canaanites* must be sought to remove a Judgment from off the *Israelites*: yet this advantage they got of the people of God by being oppressed by them.

So then he will avenge all kind of oppression, but the suffering of his Saints shall be sure to be requited. *Providentiam cæteris non negamus, sed curam Sponsa vindicat*; *Bern.* Their Redeemer is mighty, and he will plead their cause, *Prov. xxiii. 10.* Thus *Isaiah* comforts the people of God, *Chap. xliii. 4.* *Thou wert precious in my fight, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give men for thee, and people for thy life.* God, as he is the Governour of the World, in his General Providence, forbids wrong and violence to any man; but as he is the Governour of his Church, he holds over them a special protection. God is a *King of Nations*, *Jer. x. 7.* and so is careful to maintain justice amongst them: but he is in a more especial manner a *King of Saints*, *Rev. xv. 3.* and watches over his Church, if any shall annoy them. As a King will avenge wrongs done to any of his Subjects; but wrongs done to his own children, or his choice Favourites, or to any within the Verge, shall be sure to be repaid, and heavily punished. *Tantum de tertio*; the Parties wronged, *his own Elect.*

Come we,

Fourthly, To the *Exigent*, upon which he will do it: and in it the *Motive*, from without; and that is,

II. *Their crying unto him day and night.* And here is a fifth advantage and improvement

provement of the similitude. The prayers of the poor widow were tedious and irksome to the unjust Judge. *Exorfit tædio quod non potuit merito*, Aug. in *Psal. ciii.* But the prayers of God's people, the more importunate, the more pleasing and delightful they are to God. *He is a God that hears prayer.* The prayers of his Church are his chief delight. *Let me see thy countenance* (saith Christ to his Spouse) *let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely*, Cant. ii. 14. *Amat iuvena Salvatoris, ut pulsatoribus abundet oportunis, importunis*, saith *Augustine*. God loves to see his doors thronged with Suiters. *Send her away*, say the Disciples to Christ, *for she cries after us*. No, let her alone, Christ will have her cry lowder and lowder. The lowder the Musick, the sweeter to his ears. *Domine quas tuorum preces exaudis, si has non exaudis?* such prayers and importunities shall be sure to speed.

So then the *Exigent*, upon which God will avenge his Elect, is their earnest prayer to him. And here are two things considerable:

I. Here is the necessity of this duty.

II. The Importunity of it; And that both in the intention and vehemency, it must be a crying to him; and also in the constancy and continuance of it, *Day and night*.

I. Here is the necessity of this duty: they must pray unto him. But what needs this Condition and *Proviso*? The men to be avenged and succoured, are God's own Elect; is not that sufficient to procure their deliverance? May we not thus reason and conclude. *If we be elected, then, without any more ado, we shall be delivered*? No, verily; though there be a certain, yet there is not an immediate connection betwixt Election and Salvation: but many Actions, and Duties, and subordinate means must come betwixt, and joyn them together. Our Election, 'tis no *Supersedeas* to our Devotion; it doth not quench, but kindle our prayers. Neither God's purposes in our Election, nor his promises in our Vocation, are so absolute, but that they exact our duties of Piety and earnest Invocation. The seal of our Election is the spirit of Adoption, and that will make us cry *Abba Father*. What saith *David*? *Psal. xxxiv. 15. The eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous. He sees our afflictions, He knows our Souls in adversity*: but yet for all that he adds, *His ears are open unto their prayers*. Though he sees our condition, yet he expects, and exacts our prayer and supplication. *Ezek. xxxvi.* There God promises to save his people from the Heathen round about them, he assures them of it; *I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it*; but then he adds that Clause and *Proviso*; *I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*.

II. Take notice of the Importunity of Prayer.

1. In the intention and vehemency, 'tis a crying unto God.

2. In the constancy and continuance, *Day and night*. And here is a sixth advantage and improvement of the similitude. The oppressed Widow haunted the unjust Judge with her Petitions; the Church here comes not short of her; nay, goes beyond her in her strong prayers, and in her long prayers: *She cries, and she cries day and night*. The Church of God is here compared to a Widow; and here she fulfils Saint Paul's description of a good Widow, *1 Tim. v. 5. She that is a Widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continues in prayers and supplications night and day*.

(1.) There must be a cry. Earnestness and vehemency, are the great helps of Prayer; they are *adjumenta & ornamenta orationis*, they do both fortifie and beautifie our Prayers. Remiss and cold wishes vanish in the air; but strong cries and supplications they pierce the Heavens, and offer an holy violence unto God. *Ec hæc vis Deo grata est*, saith *Tertullian*. God delights in such importunity.

It must be a cry, and yet not every kind of cry will do it.

1. There is a *clamor causæ*, the cry of the cause, when that cries in God's ears; as *Abel's* blood cried to God for vengeance.

2. There is *clamor plagentis*, the cry of them that bewail their sufferings. *Hosea* speaks of such clamours, *Chap. vii. 14. They have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds*. Such cries are but the howlings of Nature,

Serm. I. Nature, not the cries of Devotion. That which the Text calls for, is *clamor orationis*, the strong cries of our prayers and supplications. *Desiderium*, 'tis *vox orationis*; but *vehemens desiderium*, 'tis *clamor orationis*. Our prayers speak to God, but our earnest prayers, they cry to God. And these cries are always seasonable, but of all in days of danger and affliction. Then what saith *Hezekiah* to *Isaiah*? *This day is a day of trouble, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. Make thy voice to be heard on high.* What saith the King of *Niniveh*? *Let every man cry mightily unto God, Keep not silence, give the L O R D no rest,* *Isai. lxii. 1.* Christ being in an agony, prayed more earnestly, *Luke xxii. 44.* Such prayer is called *instant prayers*, or *without ceasing*. This crying to God was typified by the sounding of trumpets, *Numb. x. 9.* *When the enemy oppresses you, ye shall blow with the Trumpets, and ye shall be remembered before the L O R D, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.* *Clamores orationum sunt clangores tubarum.* Earnest prayers are loud and shrill Trumpets in God's ears.

(2.) And as these trumpets of Prayer must be loud, so they must be lasting. These cries are day and night, instant and constant prayers. Strength and length of Devotion, are the two wings of Prayer. *Paul* calls it *persevering in Prayer*. We must not have *Bethulian Devotions*, *Judith vii.* If God will not deliver us within five days, we will give over our prayers. Fasting and Prayer, that's the devotion of the day; and Watchings and Prayer, that's the devotion of the night. There were a Society of Monks in *Constantinople*, called *Momachi insomnes*, some of which company were praying at all seasons of the night. Well, that excess of devotion is laid aside. Alas! who breaks his sleep to pray and mourn for the afflictions of the Church? The Ship is in a tempest, and ready to sink, and *Jonah* is got into a warm Cabin and is fast asleep. Christ commends this Watching unto Prayer, under the Parable of him that at midnight went to borrow bread of his neighbour, and by importunity prevailed with him, *Luke xi.* An unseasonable hour for the man to rise; but God likes such importunities. These *nocturni mendicantes*, as *Augustine* calls them, these mid-night Beggars they are welcome to God, which like importunate Suiters will observe no *decorum* of Time and Place; but will haunt him whom they sue to, wherever they can find him. *Non tantum offerunt Deo preces, sed ingerunt & impingunt:* Enforce their prayers upon him, and extort a grant from him. Like those men that brought the Palsie-man to Christ; if the doors be shut, they will untile the house, and break up the roof, but they will bring him to Christ that he might be cured.

We have done with the Assertion, *God will avenge.* Come we,

Secondly, To the prevention of an intervening Objection, *Though he bear long with them.* He will avenge his Elect, but he takes time, he doth not presently either rescue them, or repay their persecutors. And this delay, 'tis a strong temptation.

First, Here is a temptation of Diffidence in the Saints oppressed. *David* suffered this temptation, *Psal. lxx. 7, 8, 9.* *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* So again he complains of this delay, *Psal. xxii. 2.* *O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* And then,

Secondly, This delay, 'tis a temptation of Presumption to the Churches enemies; They say, *God hath forsaken him, persecute him, and take him, for there is none to deliver him.* Well our Saviour tells us 'tis neither so, nor so: That delay, 'tis not *παρρησία*, but *μακροθυμία*, not negligence, but patience; *βραδύνη ἀλλὰ μακροθυμία*, saith *St. Peter*, 'tis not slackness but forbearance.

'Tis patience, and but patience.

I. To these persecutors 'tis but his patience, he doth not forgive them.

II. To his Elect 'tis but patience, he doth not forget them. God will have his patience to have a perfect work. He sets back the Glory of his Justice in punishing; I, and the glory of his mercy in delivering, that he may set forth the glory of his patience in forbearing. And he is thus patient, to teach us patience.

'Tis

'Tis one great end why he calls us to sufferings, *that tribulation may work patience*, Rom. v. 3. Patience is one of the highest Graces that a Christian is capable of in this life. *Let patience have her perfect work*, saith St. James, *that ye may be perfect-ed, and entire, wanting nothing*. A patient Christian is a most accomplished Christian. Such are Scholars of the highest Form in the School of Christ. *I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my Name*. 'Twas St. Paul's Lesson that God taught him, *Acts. ix. 16*.

Serm. I.

Now this forbearance of God, e're he revengeth, hath three measures to proportion it. The

1. Is *mensura tolerantiae*; he will suffer his to be oppressed no more then they can endure. Though he doth not lighten their burthens, yet he will strengthen their backs. Though he doth not presently deliver them, yet he will support them. The

2. Is *mensura utilitatis*; they shall suffer no more than will turn to their good. 'Tis for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. The sick man would be rid of his Physick: *Sed medicus non capit consilium ab ægroto*; the Physician consults with his Patients necessity, not with his fanſie. Lels than so much will do no good. The

3. Is *mensura orationis*. He forbears to deliver them till he hath quickned up their prayers to a full improvement. Sufferings work kindly when they beget prayers to God, and earnest supplications. When they are come to the due pitch, then he will answer this poor Widow, the Church; *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou desirest*. That's one reason *Augustine* gives of these delays in God; *Si non dat ad horam, exercet quærentem, non contemnit petentem*. He helps not presently, to encrease and exercise thy prayer and devotion. And again, *Primo nos capaces reddit, deinde capaces factos implet*. Earnest prayer hath a virtue of dilating and enlarging our heart; when that's enlarged, then God supplies it. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*, *Psal. lxxxi. 10*. Till then, say to thy soul, as *David* speaks to his, *Psal. xxvii. 14*. *Tarry the Lord's leisure, Be of good courage, he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord*.

And that thou mayest do so with more comfort, listen to the last part of the Text, which is,

Thirdly, The Confirmation of this promise; *I tell you, he will avenge them speedily*. And here we have both the Assurance, and the Assurer.

First, The Assurance is, *He will avenge them speedily*: and

Secondly, The Assurer is Christ himself; *I tell you*. We have Christ's own word for it.

I. In the Assurance here is an amends for all his delay. Indeed he sets out to this work of avenge leisurely; but then he puts forward and mends his pace swiftly; *He doth it speedily*.

Long delays, and yet speedy supplies! these seem to be inconsistent.

To reconcile these two durations, we must know, there is a double measure and estimate of them.

1. To sense, and feeling, and natural apprehension, our sufferings seem long, and God's deliverances leisurely, and but slow-paced. *Usque quò, Domine, usque quò? How long, Lord, how long?* But to Faith, his help is speedy, his deliverance at hand. Faith will not be over-hasty, loves not to put God out of his pace. *Tet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*: That's Faith's assurance, *Heb. x. 37*.

2. And then secondly, the estimate is comparative. Compare our time of sufferings with the time of our refreshings and deliverances, and our sufferings will not seem long, nor our deliverance late. *Hoc modicum longum videtur, quoniam adhuc agitur: sed cum finitum fuerit, tunc sentiemus quàm modicum fuerat*. Aug. As they say in Philosophy, "Things have a double existence, one in *mensura temporis*, another in *mensura æternitatis*: So our sufferings are in the measure of time; but our deliverances have a measure of eternity. In compare with our everlasting refreshments, our sufferings here are but momentany afflictions, *Isai. liv. 7, 8*. For a small moment

Serm. I. moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee. *Quicquid finem habet, breve est.*

3. He is said to do a thing speedily, that doth it,

1. Most seasonably.

2. With the greatest advantage; and,

3. That doth it thoroughly. As the delivery out of *Egypt* was done.

(1.) In its own proper season, at the very nick of time that God had appointed.

(2.) It was with great advantage, they came out of *Egypt* full fraught with riches. A plentiful recompence for all their oppressions.

(3.) It was a thorough deliverance; they never saw their oppressours more. Such shall be the deliverances of God's Elect out of their afflictions. Most seasonable in that good hour God hath prefixed. *The Vision is for an appointed time, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and not tarry, Habak. ii. 3.*

Then it shall be with much gain and spiritual advantage. So that thou shalt say, *'Twas good for me, that I was afflicted.* Lastly, it will be a thorough revenge upon their enemies. It shall be *in ῥῆξι* to them; take it either way, *in ῥῆξι*, speedily; a little time of their domineering; in compare with the large time in their revenge and punishment: Or *in ῥῆξι*, suddenly, when they least look for it, *God shall shoot at them: with an arrow suddenly shall they be wounded, Psal. lxxiv. 7.* When they are in their height, and ruff, then how shall they be brought into desolation, as in a moment! Oh, how suddenly, shall they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end! *Psal. lxxiii. 19.*

That's the Assurance; and,

II. The Assurer is Christ himself; I tell you. And take the weight of it in these three expressions.

1. *I tell you: Veritas dixit:* He, that is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, he assures us of it. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak:* he can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

2. *Caput Electorum dicit;* Christ, the head of the Elect, assures us that his Elect shall be avenged. *Caput & corpus unus est Christus.* That near union makes our sufferings to be his sufferings, our cause to be his cause. *Why persecutest thou me?* not my Servants, and Disciples, but me: He takes it to himself. *Arise, O Lord, and maintain thine own cause.*

3. *Judex persecutorum dicit:* The dreadful Judge of ungodly men, that persecute his servants, He saith it. *He will break the yoke of his burthen, and the red of his oppressours, as in the day of Midian, Isai. ix. 4.* How is that? We find two dayes of destruction upon the Midianites.

1. In *Judg. vii.* There he set the Midianites one against another. *Vers. 32.* *The Lord set every mans sword against his fellow:* They wrought their own destruction.

2. Another destruction of the Midianites we find *Numb. xxxi. 3.* *Avenge the LORD on the Midianites;* then there was not one Israelite lost, not one Midianite saved. Such shall be the avenge of God for his Church upon their enemies. Then the Decree of God's Election shall bring forth, as *Zephany* speaks, *Chap. ii. 2.* a woful birth to the Churches oppressours, but a joyful birth to God's Elect ones. We shall call the children of that birth, as *Joseph* named his sons that were born to him in *Egypt.* He called one *Manasseh*, Forgetful, *for God hath made me to forget all my toil:* and he called the other *Ephraim*, Fruitful; *for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the Land of my affliction.* I have got good by it: *We shall reap the peaceable fruit of righteousness by it, Heb. xii. 11.*

A

S E R M O N

On St. MARK vi. 20.

For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.



AS in the Parable which our Saviour propounds of the Sower that went forth to sow, 'tis said, *The seed fell in to several sorts of ground; some was stony, some thorny, other good-conditioned soil and fruitful:* so it fares with the preaching the word of God (which was the moral and meaning of that Parable) the Ministry of it meets with several sorts of Auditors: some that receive it into honest and good hearts, and fructifie by it; others that yield to it an outward respect and seeming conformity, but proceed no further; and then others there be that neglect and despise it, and openly oppose it.

All these appeared in *John Baptist's* Ministry.

First, The *good soil* were those that offered violence unto Heaven.

Secondly, St. *John* met with a second sort of Auditors, some plausible Professors; who though they meant not to be real and resolute Christians, yet they liked well of *John's* Preaching and Ministry, and yielded a very specious conformity to it. And then,

Thirdly, Some of *John's* seed fell among thorns, and briars, and brambles; mockers, and despisers, that withstood, and opposed him. Such were the Lawyers, the Scribes, and the Pharisees that set *John* at naught, and would not submit to him.

From the first sort we may learn the necessity of serious and strong resolution in matter of Religion; and then in the second sort, we may learn and observe the vanity and unprofitableness of a bare outward profession: And then, in the third sort, we may take notice of the impiety and wickedness of a malicious opposition.

The words which I have read unto you, they give us an instance of the second sort of *John Baptist's* Auditors, by shewing us what effect and success *John's* Ministry had with King *Herod*; what conformity and obedience it wrought in him to the Word of God. And here is a fair testimony that the Evangelist gives him of many specious performances in point of Religion. And that we may take the better estimate of it, we will reduce what he had to say of it, to these three Considerations.

First, Let us consider *Herod's* proficiency in matter of Religion, how far he went.

Secondly, Let us consider the unsufficiency of this his progress in Religion, and wherein he failed.

Thirdly, Then we shall take notice of *Herod's* deficiency, and falling from that degree of proficiency, to which he had attained.

For the first, *Herod's* proficiency in the entertainment of *John's* Ministry, and conformity to it, will appear in these several respects, which the Text tells us he did to him. The

First was *Herod's* preservation of *John Baptist's* life, and sheltering, and protecting him against *Herodias* malice. In the foregoing verse, 'tis said *Herodias* had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him, but she could not; for *Herod* feared *John*, knowing that he was a just man, and would not suffer *Herodias* to wrong him, and to have her

Serm. I. will of him, but hindred any attempt that was made against him, not only by the Scribes and Pharisees, but his beloved *Herodias* must forbear to hurt him.

Observe it; *Wicked and unregenerate men may take such a liking to the Word of God, and be so affected with it, as to become maintainers and protectours, and defenders of the servants of God that minister it to them.* It fared thus with the Prophet *Jeremy*, when the Priests, his enemies, would have made him to be put to death, and stirred up the People and incensed them against him, yet then, some of the Elders (no very good men) interceded for him, dissuaded the People from so bloody a fact; told them how the Prophet *Micah* had said as much as *Jeremy* had said, and yet was not punished for it; and urged the foul fact of *Jehojakim* against the Prophet *Uriah*, Jer. xxvi. 20. *Zedekiah* also, though no better than *Herod*, yet he lends protection to the Prophet *Jeremy*, advises him to hide himself from those wicked Princes that sought his life, and would have destroyed him.

How often were the common people a shelter and safeguard to Christ against the fury of his Enemies? Many times the Scribes and Pharisees would have destroyed him, but the People hindred them. *Mark* xii. 2. there 'tis said, *They sought to lay hold on him, but they feared the people.* *Luke* xxii. 2. *The Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might kill him, but they feared the People.* And *St. Luke* gives the reason of it, why the People thus sheltered and protected our Saviour, *They were taken with his preaching.* And though little good was wrought in them in point of Conversion, yet it prevailed with them to let themselves for his safety and preservation. *Luke* xix. 47. *The Chief Priests sought to destroy him, but could not find what they might do; for all the People were very attentive to hear him; they were taken with his preaching.*

Indeed this work when 'tis done out of Piety to shelter God's Ministers, 'tis graciously accepted of God, and highly rewarded. Such an one was good *Obediah*. When *Ahab* and *Jezebel* persecuted God's Prophets, and sought to destroy them, that holy man he hid God's Prophets from their fury, and fed, and succoured them, 1 *Kings* xviii. 13. And the like good work did *Ebedmelech* in preserving of *Jeremy*, who drew him out of the Dungeon, and saved him from perishing: What saith God to him? *I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not be given into the hands of the men of whom thou art afraid.* Jer. xxxix. 17. It bred great comfort and confidence in good *Nehemiah*, that he had been a succourer of these servants of God; *Remember me, O God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and the offices thereof,* *Nehem.* xiii. 14. What an earnest Prayer doth *Paul* make for *Onesiphorus*, who had been a comfort to him in his sufferings! 2 *Tim.* i. 16. *The LORD give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* This work done out of Religious Grounds will breed comfort to thee; but if it be done out of *Herod's* spirit only, trust not unto it, for it will fail thee.

But then withal, consider in what case are they that have not gone so far as *Herod* in this point of protection; meer *Gallio's*, that can see *Sosthenes* beaten and misused, and never care for it, *Acts* xviii. 17. If *Herod* be damned, that preserved *John Baptist*; what became of *Herodias*, that thirsted after his blood? If *Lyfias* that rescued Saint *Paul* be no better than a cast-away, what became of those Jews that would have destroyed him? *Paul's* Sisters Son that discovered the Conspiracy against *Paul*, *Acts* xxiii. 16. (*St. Chrysostome* saith we read of no other good of him) what shall we think of those that combined together to destroy and murder him? That's the first step of *Herod's* proficiency, his preservation of *John Baptist*.

Secondly, A second effect of *John's* Ministry in *Herod*, is, that it wrought in him an awful regard of *St. John's* Person. The Text saith, *He feared John.* *John Baptist* had got authority over *Herod*, kept him in some awe; he durst not do what he would, as long as *John* was about him.

Observe, *The Word of God may so far prevail upon an unregenerate man, as to work in him a fear, and awful regard, and to captivate him to the Authority of Religion*

in the Servants of God. Such Authority did God put upon *Moses* his Person; he made him a God unto *Pharaoh*; and so 'tis said of him, *Exod. xi. 3. The man Moses was very great in the Land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's Servants, and in the sight of the People.* His Person and Presence was awful to them. And so *St. Chrysostom* observes it of *St. Paul*, where ever he came, amongst the Souldiers, amongst the Mariners, still he bore sway amongst them. Not that either *Paul* did, or Ministers ought, to intermeddle in matters that do not belong unto them; (a practice that hath kindled more fire in Christendom than can easily be quenched). But the eminent Sanctity of *John* and *Paul*, and such Saints as they, hath oftentimes a power upon other men, to restrain their enormities, and to keep them in compass.

Serm. I.

Yes, this is the excellency and honour of Religion and Piety; when it shines in its strength, it dazles the eyes of wicked men, makes them wonder at it, and stand in awe of those in whom it is evident. That's the meaning of those words in the *Psalmist*, *They shall bind their Kings in Chains, and their Nobles with fetters of Iron; such honour have all his Saints*, *Psal. cxlix. 8.* Alas, poor *John Baptist*, what could he do to *Herod* to make him afraid of him! *Herod* was not under his controul; yes, but the lustre of *St. John's* Sanctity commands, and extorts regard and reverence. The Image of God in *Adam* was a terrour to the Beasts: and when this Image is repaired in the Saints, it is awful to wicked men. *Moses* his face, when it shined, the People were afraid of him. Piety, even in the poorest Saint, it commands respect even from the greatest; whereas without it, all other dignity begets a secret contempt.

And as Religion commands it, so you see *Herod* is taken with this fear of *John*; he durst not take his full swing in ill courses, for fear of him. So *Abah* stood in fear of *Elias*. The men of *Gilgal* were startled at the presence of *Samuel*; they were afraid as soon as he came amongst them. That sacred Inscription on the High-Priest's Forehead, *Holiness to the LORD*, made that mighty Conquerour *Alexander* stoop to *Jaddus* the High-Priest of God, and do reverence to him. So then,

I. Doth *Herod* stand in fear of *John*? 'tis then no evidence of Piety and Goodness not to do evil for fear of others. Many seem to be good, because they durst not displease others that have authority over them; they are good, because they are under good Monitors: as King *Joash* would be religious all the days of the High-Priest *Jehojada*, he stood in some awe of him. No, he is good that can be good in a crooked Generation, *Custode remoto*. As *Paul* commends the *Philippians*, that they were obedient, *not only in his presence, but even in his absence also*. If thy goodness be for fear of men only, it will dye with them; but if for fear of God, it will last and continue. And then,

II. Did *Herod* fear *John*, and kept within some compass and bounds of moderation because of *John*? In what case are they that are of his temper in the Gospel, that could boast and profess that he neither feared God, nor revered man? Licentious, audacious, prophane Wretches, such as those graceless Jews were, that when they saw *Stephen's* face shine like an Angel, yet durst oppose him, and offer violence to him? Such there be that cast off all fear, despisers of those that are good, as Saint *Paul* brands them, *2 Tim. iii. 3.* Such as *Solomon* speaks of, *Prov. v. 12. that despise all instruction, and scorn to be reprov'd*: like that graceless Wretch that thrust away *Moses*, when he did reprove him, *Who made thee a Ruler or a Controller?* Or, like as the wicked *Sodomites* did to holy *Lot*, *Wilt thou take upon thee to reprove and restrain us?* We will offer villany to thee also.

Thirdly, A third effect that was wrought in *Herod* toward *John Baptist*, is a worthy esteem and acknowledgment of *St. John's* Piety and Sanctity, and those Graces that were in him; he accounted him a just man and holy. 'Tis a full testimony that *Herod* gives of him. First he acknowledges him to be a just man in his conversation with men: but that is not all, he accounts him to be an holy man in his Piety towards God. Both these make him a compleat Christian, and beyond exception.

Serm. I. exception. He was neither injurious towards men, nor impious towards God. *John* walked in the steps of his Parents, *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, of whom *St. Luke* saith, *They were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments of God, without reproof.* He that hath not both these, hath neither of them in deed and in truth. Some there be, that content themselves with the *form of Godliness*, seem to make great Conscience of Duties of Religion; but Justice and true dealing with men, they never regard it. So they seem to be godly on the Sabbath, they can be injurious and malicious all the week after. Such were the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, they are very inquisitive after the great Commandment-Duties towards God; *Master*, say they to Christ, *which is the great Commandment in the Law?* and Christ resolves them; that is the *Love of God*: But then he adds, that the second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* I, but Christ might have spared that, that's more than the *Pharisees* looked after. Others there are, that in point of just dealing, and common honesty, seem to be careful; if they wrong no man, be injurious to no man, it makes no matter with them to be unholy, and prophane in duties to God. No, that Scribe in the Gospel, that joyned both duties together, *the love of God with all our hearts, and the loving our neighbour as our selves*; Christ gave him this encouraging testimony, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*, Mark xii. 34. Well, *John* was both these, Holy and Just in an eminent manner: and see *Herod*, though void of both, yet he takes notice of both in *John*, and doth approve them.

Observe it; *Carnal, and unconverted, and sensual men, yet can come thus far, as to have the Virtues and Graces, that shine in others in a fair esteem, and in some admiration.* There is an excellency in holiness that wins esteem even there where it is not embraced. The wicked King of *Israel* would gladly hear of the great works of *Elisha*, *Gehazi* must needs relate them to him, and he much admired them. Thus holy *Daniel* was highly esteemed by *Nebuchadnezzar*; *The Spirit of the holy God was in him.* The servants of the High-Priests spake honourably of Christ, *Never man spake like him.* And so the People had honourable thoughts of him, *He is a good man, he hath done all things well.* Yet all these came short of Piety. 'Tis not the approbation of Piety in others, no, nor the admiration of it; but the imitation of it that will stand thee in stead. Even the unclean spirit that possessed the *Damocel* at *Philippi*, could say of *Paul* and *Silas*; *These are the Servants of the most high God.*

Fourthly, There is a fourth effect wrought in *Herod* towards *John* Baptist, that's a reverend behaviour towards him. The Text saith, *He observed him*, had a care to please him in his demeanour, he would be loth to offend him as little as he could. Observance is a regardful and respective carriage, studious to give content, avoiding occasions of discontenting. *Herod* would be loth to have *John* displeased.

Observe it; *A carnal unconverted man, may be so affected towards Religion, as to be willing to accommodate his carriage to the best content of the servants of God.* Thus we see even wicked Kings have been studious to observe and give good content to the Prophets of God. The Prophet *Elisha* had such power at the Court, that he could undertake and prevail in any suit. He offers his help to the *Shunamite*, to speed any request for her, 2 *Kings* iv. 13. *Wouldest thou be spoken for to the King, or to the Captain of the Host?* It seems the King would deny him nothing, but was desirous to gratifie the Prophet in any Suit he should make. Even the greatest personages have desired their countenance to put respect upon them. *Saul* sued to *Samuel* to go along with him. The company of the Prophet would be an honour to him; *Honour me, I pray thee, before the Elders of my People*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 30. It was complaint enough against *Adonijah*, that *Nathan* the Prophet, and *Zadok* the Priest were neglected by him at his Coronation, 1 *Kings* i. 26. Many a wicked man would be willing, if ordinary respects would do it, to retain the good opinion of the servants of God, and to keep good terms with them, and to be studious and regardful of them.

Fifthly, Here is yet a fifth effect of *John's* Ministry in *Herod*, that is, a willing attention to his preaching. The Text saith, *He heard him gladly.* And this fact of

Herod

Herod affords this observation; That *Even an unregenerate man, living in a state of Sensuality* (such an one was *Herod*) *may be a diligent, and constant, and a willing, and ready frequenter of the preaching of the Word.* Herod must needs have *John* to the Court, and make him his Ghostly Father, and apply himself readily unto *John's* Ministry; *He heard him, and he heard him gladly,* much delighted he was in the Baptists preaching; no question, would not miss a Sermon of *John's* upon every idle toy, or forbear to hear him upon any slight occasion. So *St. Paul* tells us of this great forwardness in many unsound Christians, that would be great frequenters of this part of God's Worship, in hearing of Sermons, *2 Tim. iv. 3. They had itching ears, a spiritual pruritus* to hear the Word; they would heap to themselves a multitude of Teachers. Thus also *Ezekiel* tells us of the great forwardness of the Elders of *Israel*, they would come daily to hear *Ezekiel*, they were very forward, and would call upon one another to frequent the Prophet; every one to his Brother would say, *Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that comes forth from the LORD,* *Ezek. xxxiii. 30.* and yet all of them false-hearted and dissembling Hypocrites. Thus *Felix* must needs hear *St. Paul* preach; he sent for him often, and communed with him, *Acts xxiv. 26.* And King *Agrippa* is much taken with *St. Paul's* reasonings in matters of Religion. O! *Micah*, if he can get himself a Chappel, and a *Levite* to be his Priest, promises to himself that God will do him good, and bless and prosper him, *Judg. xvii. 13.*

It shews the vanity of many mens Religion, that place all their Piety in *Herod's* devotion; if they can give *St. John* the hearing, and get some taste and relish of a Sermon, and be a little forwarder than some prophane men, in frequenting the publick Worship, they dare tell Christ of it at the day of Judgment, and claim Heaven for it; *Lord, Lord, open unto us, for thou hast taught in our streets,* *Luke xiii. 25, 26.* and they add too, *We heard thee gladly:* Heaven gates must fly open to such as they.

Sixthly, There is yet a further step of proficiency in *Herod*, that was a very specious Conformity to *St. John's* Doctrine. The Text tells us, *He did many things;* yielded obedience to many instructions. *St. John's* preaching prevailed with him to the doing and practising of many things commendable. And that offers to us this Observation; That, *An unregenerate man may come thus far, as to be won, and perswaded by the word to the performance of many good duties.* *Herod* it seems, yielded obedience to *John's* preaching in many particulars.

I. In his *Private Conversation*, 'tis like he abstained from some vicious courses.

II. In his *Publick Administration* and Government, he listened to *St. John* in reforming of abuses, made many good Laws for the well ordering of his Kingdom, and repressing of vices. And,

III. Was not wanting in *Ecclesiastical Affairs*. He countenanced *John's* preaching, assisted him against Gain-sayers and Opposers. He did not only *hear him gladly*, but was perswaded by him to do, yea to do many things in conformity to his Doctrine.

'Tis much to come thus far, not only to afford him Audience; but to perform Obedience: not to rest in the notional part, but to make some progress in the practick part of Religion. Yet so did *Herod* and many others, that never attained to true Conversion, and so fell short of life and salvation. *Pharaoh* he was brought oft to yield to *Moses* in fundry particulars: *First*, The men should go to serve God; then he will suffer their little ones to go; then they shall take their Cattel along with them. So *Ahab*, though a most ungodly man, yet *Elijah* prevailed with him: at his instance, the Idolatrous Priests of *Baal* were destroyed, and he brought to sorrow and heaviness, and some repentance for his sin. So *Judas*, and *Demas*, and *Ananias*, in the New Testament, did many things in conformity to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Nay, 'tis possible a man may not only do many things, but suffer many things for the Gospels sake, and yet all in vain. *St. Paul* asks the *Galatians* this Question, *Have you suffered so many things in vain?* *Gal. ii. 4.* 'Tis possible a man may do, and venture far in the cause of Religion, and yet at last, tire and give over.

We

Serm. I

We have done with the first Consideration of the Text, and seen the progress and proficiency that *Herod* made in matter of Religion. Now, let us consider,

Secondly, The insufficiency of this his progress, and see wherein it failed and came short. And this will appear to us, if we take a secondary and summary view of all those steps of proficiency that we have discovered in him. All which we will reduce to three heads.

First, The first is his worthy esteem of *John's* Person and Piety.

Secondly, The second is his diligent and willing attention to his Doctrine and Ministry. And then,

Thirdly, The third is his Obedience which he yielded to *St. John's* preaching, in doing many things in a very specious conformity.

First, For his esteem and regard of *John's* Person and Piety. 'Tis very questionable, as unsound, upon the suspicion of those false grounds from which it did arise; and we may see three suspicious grounds of it.

I. The first suspicious ground of this high esteem of *John*, we may justly conceive, was Popularity. The world was grown into a great admiration of *John*; they wondered at his holiness, they took him to be more than a man, some incarnate Angel, his life was so conspicuous for all kind of Sanctimony. No marvel if *Herod* esteem him, when all men admire him.

Observe it, *Popularity and conformity to the multitude of other men, may bring on even a wicked man to regard Religion*. When Religion is in request, and grown into fashion, and becomes a matter of reputation, 'tis no great matter then to become an admirer and honourer of it. *Simon Magus* will be a Disciple and turn Christian, when the whole City of *Samaria* listens to the Apostles, and embraces their Doctrine. The Crowd will carry a man thither, whither of himself he would not go. Stream, and Wind, and Tide will give motion to that, which would never stir of it self. *All men throng thee, saith Peter to Christ, and dost thou wonder that some do touch thee?*

This may prove a *temptation*, and trial of the truth and soundness of thy Religion; it will appear what thy Religion is, when the stream of the multitude turns another way. 'Tis easie to follow Christ when all the multitude brings him in triumph, and sing *Hosannah* to him: But when they carry him out to *Mount Calvary*, and cry, *Crucifie him, crucifie him*, darest thou stick to him then, bear his Cross for him, with *Simon of Cyrene*, beg his body with *Joseph*, stand by his Grave with *Mary Magdalene*? Darest thou be a Christian, when Christianity brings a contempt with it? Wilt thou speak in the cause of God with *Jeremy*, when the *Word of the Lord* is a reproach to thee? 'Tis a sign thy Religion is out of Piety, not Popularity.

II. A second suspicious ground of *Herod's* respect to *John*, that makes it insufficient, is Policy. *Herod* was a Fox, as our Saviour terms him. He thought it safe to hold in with *John*, to get him to the Court, and to put Countenance upon him, it would satisfy the People well. He had a stitch against *John*; but he feared the People, *Mat. xiv. 5*. *Herod* was an intruder, and very unacceptable to the Jews, and therefore to endear and naturalize himself to their good opinion, he turns Proselyte, is circumcised, all to strengthen his Kingdom. The people might have mutined, it might take well with the People, and gain upon their good will, this entertainment of *John*. *Jehu* knew what he did when he acquainted himself with that holy man *Jonadab*, and took him into his Chariot; it would please the People well to see *Jehu* and *Jonadab* so well acquainted, *2 Kings x. 15*.

This is the scantling of many mens Religion. The Apostle *St. Jude* gives a Character of them; *They have mens persons in admiration, because of advantage*, Verse 16. they hope to gain and prosper by it. This was *Demetrius* his Divinity, Cry up *Diana* for a great Goddess, *Acts xix. 28*. He gives the reason of it to his Companions; *Sirs, you know, that by this craft we get our wealth*. They counted Gain Godliness. It was the *Sechemites* Religion, they would be circumcised in Policy to gain *Jacob's* estate and goods. *Let us consent to them to be circumcised, shall not their Cattell and all their substance be ours?* *Gen. xxxiv. 23*. This brought on *Judas* to be a Disciple; he heard talk of a Kingdom that Christ should have, and so became his

his follower. He hoped for an Office and promotion in it. Let us seem to be zealous, and cry out of abuses, and call for Reformation, some good Office or Lordship shall fall to our share by it.

Serm. I.

This will be discovered when Piety and Policy stand in opposition, and draw several ways. When two men walk together, 'tis not known to which of them the servant belongs that waits upon them; but when they part, and take several ways, then it will appear to whom the servant belongs, to him whom he follows, and forsakes the other. So when Piety and Policy go in the same Road, we cannot discern whether it be Piety or Policy that leads thee that way; but when Piety calls one way, and Policy another, if thou forsake Piety, and cleave unto Policy, all thy former Religion was but Craft and Policy. Thus Judas was discovered; the supposed Kingdom of Christ went not forward, opposition increased, the multitude fell from Christ, his followers were like to suffer persecution, it makes Judas bethink himself of some other course; he forsakes Christ, and joyns with the prevailing Party of the High-Priests faction. This also was seen in Jehu's reformation, he destroys Baal, which was Ahab's Idolatry, out of Israel very zealously; but had he done it out of Piety and for the love of God, he would have destroyed Jeroboam's Idolatry, his Golden Calves that were worshipped at Bethel. No, 'tis said, that Jehu clave to the sin of Jeroboam. It was a politick Idolatry, it was a great assurance to the Kingdom; it would be dangerous to let his People frequent Jerusalem, they might fall from him, and return in allegiance to the house of David. This was it that cast, and condemned Christ in the judgment of Pilate; he strove a long time against the importunity of the Jews, that would put have him Christ to death: he was desirous to save him, protested he found no cause to condemn him. But when the Jews pressed him with a politick Argument, and told him, it would not be safe for him to acquit Christ; they said, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend*, Joh. xix. 12. that speech prevailed with him, and struck all dead. When Pilate heard that saying, he made no more ado but condemned Christ presently. He dealt with Christ as King Achish did with David, 1 Sam. xxix. 9. *As the Lord lives, I have not found evil in thee; nevertheless the Lords of the Philistines do not favour thee*; I must not displease them, and so he discharged him from attending upon him. Upon this ground Zedekias forsook the Prophet Jeremy, to gratifie the Princes that would destroy Jeremy; *He is in your hand, do with him what you will*, I can deny you nothing, Jer. xxxviii. 5. Thus the World turns Piety into Policy, and Self-denial into Self-preservation. But then,

III. To make the best of it, a third ground of Herod's good respect to St. John, that makes his proficiency to be unsufficient, might be a natural ingenuity, a remainder of right reason and common honesty, which might be in Herod, and might move him to think well of John Baptist, and esteem worthily of him.

There is in many carnal men some candour, and equity, and moderation, which will prevail with them to give some approbation, and shew some affection and respect to Religion in others, though they will not embrace and entertain it in themselves. St. Paul tells us of some unconverted men that yet can approve things that are excellent, Rom. ii. 18. Besides those things that are truly and properly spiritual, there are some excellencies that do accompany Piety and Religion, that may be apprehended, and well esteemed by meer natural men; and accordingly their natural ingenuity will affect and approve them, though they have no true relish of that which is indeed spiritual in Piety and Religion: Thus deceiving their own hearts, as if they loved Religion for the Sanctity of it. St. Gregory speaks excellently to this purpose, *Sapi sibi ipsi mens ipsa mentitur, & fingit se de bono opere amare, quod non amat*: "Many a man deceives himself, and thinks he loves that in Religion, which indeed he loves not, but some other thing for it.

i. Natural ingenuity will see and discern a great deal of innocency in Religion. True Piety and Christianity will make Christians unblameable, inoffensive, and of an harmless conversation: so that they gain a good report of them that are without, as Paul speaks. Thus Saint Peter describes good Christians, 1 Pet. ii. 12. *They have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they may by their good works which they shall behold, glorifie God in the day of visitation*. Such an one

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was St. *John*, most innocent and harmless. Thus the People gave testimony to *Sa-
muel*, that though they flung off his Government, yet they confessed he was most
innocent and unblameable. Thus in the Primitive times, the more ingenuous Hea-
thens would testify for the Christians. *Pliny* wrote to the Emperour *Trajan*, that
the Christians were free from any vice, of unblameable lives, they could find no
fault with them. *Bonus vir Caius Seius, malus tantum, quod Christianus*: 'twas the
usual speech of those times; "Such an one is a good man, all the fault is, that he
"is a Christian. As it was said of *Daniel*, his enemies could find no occasion or
fault in him in all his dealings, *Dan. vi. 4*. This innocency often gains favour and
affection to Religion, even from those that are strangers to it.

2. Ingenuity observes a great deal of utility and profitableness in Religion. Good
Christians they are not only harmless, and inoffensive, but they are useful and helpful,
and beneficial to the Times and Places wherein they live. *John* had made Publi-
cans, and Souldiers, and the common People more orderly and obedient, and that
pleased *Herod* well. This gained *Joseph* much favour with his Master, because all
things prospered with him. And *Pharaoh* could spie it in *Joseph*, and honoured it
in him; *Can we find such a man as this is, in whom the Spirit of God is?* he is for our
turn, let us employ him to manage the Kingdom. This made *Laban* so loth to
part with *Jacob*; *I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarre, for I have
learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake*, *Gen. xxx. 27*. This
moved King *Darius* to honour and prefer *Daniel*; *because an excellent Spirit was in
him, and the King thought to set him over the whole Realm*, *Dan. vi. 3*. Christianity will
make every Servant to be an *Onefimus*. The very name signifies one that is profit-
able. 'Tis not the Piety, but the Commodity and Profitableness of Religion that
gains favour and esteem amongst worldly men.

3. An ingenuous man, though but in the state of Nature, can observe a great
deal of beauty and comeliness in Religion. Piety, when it appears in the life of
a Christian, is exceeding lovely; as *Solomon* speaks, *it makes the face to shine*. Ho-
liness is amiable, not only in the eyes of God and good men, but even many a
natural man beholds the beauty of it, and cannot but esteem it: As even that
which is commendable in a natural man, is not to be despised, but regarded by
a Christian. As 'tis said of the young man in the Gospel, that had done many
things fairly, that Christ looking upon him loved him, *Mark x. 21*. thought well
of him for his honest conversation: so the beauty of Piety in a Christian cannot
but win some fair esteem from a carnal man. No question *John's* holiness was ami-
able even to *Herod*; his gravity and mortified life did win esteem to him. These
excellencies are discernable by an ingenuous, though but a carnal eye, and may pro-
cure respect; but that which is spiritual, the truth, and substance of it doth not
affect them. 'Twas not *John's* Piety that relished with *Herod*, but these *condimen-
ta Pietatis*, which were as sauces and sweetnings unto it, they pleased his Palate,
and made him esteem *John* Baptist for them. That's the first Consideration, the fail-
ing and unsufficiency of the esteem of *John's* Person and Piety. Come we

Secondly, To the next Consideration of the second thing observable in *Herod*,
which was his diligent Attention to St. *John's* Preaching and Ministry; he heard
him gladly. But even this forwardness falls short and will appear unsufficient upon
two suspicions.

I. We have just cause to suspect his Disposition, out of which he did it.

II. We may well suspect the Motives and Grounds that made him thus at-
tentive to *John* Baptist's Doctrine.

I. This attention of *Herod* to *John's* Preaching arises out of a suspicious dispo-
sition; 'tis said, *He heard him gladly, took delight and pleasure in it; and so*.

r. This Attention of *Herod*, it was *fundata in passione*. All this his for-
wardness in hearing, it was but a passion, a pleasure and delight that he took,
and that brought him on to give *John* the hearing. Christ tells us that the stony
ground received the seed, as did the good ground; such are they that hear the
Word, and receive it with gladness, take pleasure in it, it suits with their humour.
But true Piety digs deeper, builds upon stronger and firmer grounds, acts out of
judgment

judgment and resolution. A wicked man may have his affections moved, and be presently stirred to hear the Word, and yet his heart may be dead and never wrought upon.

2. This passion in *Herod*, it was *preproperous*, and *preposterous*: his delight and joy was too forward. Some other motion and affection should have been stirred up in him. No question, *John's* preaching, might it been suffered to work kindly, would have stirred up fear, and care, and sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation; we hear of none of these; but only *Herod's* fancy was taken, and begat delight in him. The matter of salvation, 'tis not a jocund and a sporting work, it must be wrought out with fear and trembling. *Isaiah* shews with what affection we should hear, *Isai* lxvi. 5. *Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word.* Of the two, *Felix* was the better Auditor than *Herod*; *Felix* trembled at *Paul's* preaching; *Herod* smiles, and is much delighted to hear *John Baptist*. Saint *Augustine* reports a story of a wicked and barbarous Custom used in *Cesarea* of a long time; which he hearing of, he repaired to that City, and preached against it. The People listened to him with great attention, and testified their delight in his preaching, with many acclamations and signs of applause. But *Augustine* regarded not that, but he brought them to sighing, and sorrowing, and shedding of tears; then he concluded he had done good upon them. So *Hierom*, "Let not the applauses, but the tears and groans of thy Auditors be thy commendation."

3. It was *humana passio*, he delighted in Saint *John's* preaching with the same affection that he shewed in other things. *John* preaches, and he pleases him: and young *Herodias* she dances, and she pleases him; no difference. A religious man even in outward delights, rejoices spiritually; a carnal man, even in spiritual things, rejoices carnally.

Here is the Tryal: Receive thou the Word as the word of man, or as the Word of God? If as the word of man, then humane affection will be all that thou wilt afford it: but, if as the word of God, then, as *St. Paul* speaks, thou wilt receive it with joy in the Holy Ghost. Try thy Religion by this Touch-stone. What other affections bringest thou to a Sermon than thou carriest with thee to any business, or pastime? Comest thou with the same uncircumcised and unhallowed ear? if so, thou comest without Piety, and returnest without Profit.

4. It was *passio superabilis*, a passion of joy in hearing the Word; but it was yet controllable, and easily overcome by another delight. His Birth-day joy, and his delight he takes in the Damsels dancing, hath exceeded and overcome all the delight he took in *John*. *John* preached, and pleased *Herod*; in comes a Minstrel with a dance, and carries it clear from *John*, she pleases *Herod* a great deal more.

Here is a discovery of his unsufficient progress. 'Tis not every pang or passionate delight that will do it, but the joy of the Spirit must overbear and exceed all carnal joy. What saith *David*? *I take more joy in thy word, than in mine appointed food.* *Saul* would seem to be devout, and to consult with God, and calls for the Priest to bring the Ephod; but ere he hath done his devotion, news comes to him of other business, and now he is not at leisure to wait upon God. *Withdraw thy hand*, said he to the Priest, we must mind other matters, *1 Sam. xiv. 19.* Was *Herod* ever so much taken with *John's* preaching, as to yield to him so great a suit as he granted to his Minstrel? She may have what she will, *half his Kingdom*, if she pleases, or *John Baptist's* head, if she do demand it. *Narraverunt homines delectationes multas, sed non sicut Lex tua*: so *Augustine* reads the words of the Psalm, "The World tells me of many delights, but none such, or so sweet as thy Law is."

That's the first exception, this forwardness came from a suspicious passion.

II. The Motives that made him thus attentive, are very suspicious.

1. Was it not the Novelty of *John's* teaching that did thus delight him? Here is a new extraordinary Prophet risen, that comes with a Doctrine never published before, and that takes *Herod*, and wins his attention. *Moses* was preached every Sabbath day, we hear of no such forwardness to listen to him. Oh! but a new Divine is come lately into the Country, that hath a strain by himself, there will

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be flocking to him. This made the *Athenians* listen to *St. Paul*, because he seemed to be a Setter-forth of a new Religion. Let *St. John* hold on for some time, all this forwardness will cool again. What saith Christ of the Baptist? *He was a burning and a shining light, and they rejoiced in his light for a season*: it held but for a while, soon weary of him. 'Tis but the crackling of Thorns in the fire, a sudden blaze for a time, and soon out again.

2. Or secondly, Was it not some generality of Truth that might give *Herod* content? No doubt *John* had many deep discourses in matters of Divinity about the nature of God, and the Controversies of the Times. And *Herod* can hear these discourses gladly. A doctrinal, notional Preacher, that can feed the Understanding with some sublime apprehensions in matters of Religion, may find acceptance. There is in many men *libido quædam intellectus*, a kind of spiritual lust in our understanding, that is much pleased with such high strains, and contemplative discourses.

3. Or thirdly, 'Tis like *St. John's* preaching cleared a great doubt and scruple in *Herod's* mind concerning the *Messias*, that had much troubled him. We know his Predecessor, the other *Herod*, when he heard of the birth of Christ, and that he was to be the King of the *Jews*, was much perplexed. He feared Christ came to be a temporal King, and so he and his Posterity should lose their Kingdom. But *John* preached Christ, *as the truth is in Jesus*, that *Christ's Kingdom was not of this World*, he came to pardon sins, to rule in the Souls of men. *John* tells them that the Kingdom of Heaven was now approaching; assures them that Christianity teaches obedience to worldly Powers and Potentates; doth not disturb them, much less destroy them. And this Doctrine was welcome to *Herod*, *He heard it gladly*.

4. Or fourthly, Was it not *John's* severity in preaching against the sins of the time? *John* had his thunderings against the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, and the Priests and Scribes, and Doctors of the Law; he was a sharp reprover of vice and disorders; he taught the Souldiers to be content with their wages, and not to mutiny. And *Herod* could hear other mens faults taxed and reprov'd, it was Musick to him.

5. Or lastly, Were they not some personal excellencies in *John's* preaching that *Herod* delighted in, his wit, or elocution, or some graceful delivery? (as no doubt, *John* was a most accomplished Preacher) These took *Herod's* fancy, and gained his attention. It was that which made the *Jews* listen to *Ezekiel's* preaching, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Lo, thou art to them, saith God, as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument. Ezekiel's* eloquence was as Musick to them. 'Twas the Tune they regarded more than the Ditty. Such were many of the *Corinthians*, some liked *Paul's* way of preaching best, others were for *Peter*, others were taken with *Apollos* his eloquence. *They had the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of Persons*.

The proof will be, that these, or such as these, were the Motives that made *Herod* delight in *John* Baptist's preaching. For, let *John* take the seventh Commandment for his Text, and preach against incestuous Marriages, and so fall upon *Herod's* great sin which he lived and delighted in, then *Herod* flies off presently. And now, like *Saul*, while *David* is playing on his Harp, and hath touched upon an harsh string, he flings his Javelin at him, and would nail him to the wall. Whereas true Piety will be of *Cornelius* his mind, *Acts x. 33. ready to hear every word of God that shall be spoken to us*; especially that that concerns our selves; with *David* suffer *Nathan* to point him out, and to say to him, *Thou art the man*; entertain a reproof as *Hezekiah* did, when *Isaiah* reprehended him for his vain-glory; *The word of the Lord is good. Let the righteous reprove me, saith David, it shall be as a precious oymment, Psal. cxli. 5.*

Thirdly, The third thing considerable is *Herod's* conformity to *John's* preaching; he yielded to his Doctrine in many things, and submitted to it. He was not a bare Auditor, gave *John* the hearing only; but made some progress in practice too. *John's* preaching prevailed with him, and made him do many things. Now, surely, a very specious conformity, had it not some suspicions and failings in it.

I. This Conformity is suspicious; because,

1. These Many things which *Herod* did, they were *facilia*, some light, easie performances. A carnal man can be very forward in some cheap obervances; such Duties as cross not any strong bent of his lusts; ye may prevail with him for the performance of them, and so for forbearance of some sins not rooted in his nature, or grown strong by custom, or bringing with them any forcible temptation: Such a Reformation you may bring an unregenerate man to. No doubt *Herod* forbore many an Oath, and abstained from many vanities; but it cost him no great striving. He put himself to no great pain in this doing or forbearing. Canst thou mortifie thy dearest sins, cross thy lusts, and strive against them? Work thy self to the practice of those good duties that are painful and laborious? Such a conformity argues truth of Grace in thee.

2. These Many things which *Herod* did, 'tis like they were *plausibilia*, some plausible performances that the world will take notice of, and speak well of; such makes for *Herod's* reputation in the world, and you may win him unto them. Come see my zeal, saith *Jehu*, which I have for the Lord. Applause and commendation may draw us to the doing of some pious Duties. But try *Herod* with the more inward, and private, and secret parts of Piety, that men cannot discern or take notice of; thy secret Devotion and Prayer to God, the daily bewailing thy sins 'twixt God and thine own Conscience, and the strivings of thy soul against sinful inclinations, thine Alms in secret, as Christ directs: Oh! these make no noise, they are not matter of ostentation, and so *Herod* forbears them.

3. These Many things that *Herod* did, they might be *publica*, some civil, and publick, and outward Administrations; the redress of publick abuses, some good orders published and enjoined. No doubt many an honest cause sped the better for *John*, the course of justice went on more speedily. These good duties put *Herod* to no great trouble or pain. 'Tis more hard to mortifie one bosom-sin that thy soul delights in, than to bring thy self to the outward performance of the whole Law of God. And, as the Obedience of *Herod* was suspicious, so we find it,

II. To be failing and defective. He did many things: But yet fell short; he failed in other things; he dispensed with himself for some sins which he would not part with. This he would do, but That he would not do. 'Twas like *Naaman's* conversion; he promises some duties in Religion, but sues for a dispensation in others. Herein God be merciful to me: This Sin I cannot part with, Whereas entire and universal obedience is only acceptable, and of account with God. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandments, saith *David*, Psal. cxix. 6.

Satan knows this so well, that he can be content to have us yield to God in many things, only be true to Satan in some one thing. He knows one dram of poyson may spoil all the wholsom ingredients, and make them deadly. One dead Flie may taint the most precious Ointment, saith *Solomon*: One sin, unrepented of, and retained in practice, the cherishing of one lust will corrupt all other laudable and commendable duties. 'Tis said of *Naaman the Syrian*, that he was a valiant and honourable man amongst the people, but he was a Leper. So may it be said of many a Professor in Religion, he hath such and such excellencies; but he hath this sore running on him, this spot of Leprosie that marrs the beauty of all his vertues.

And Divines give the reason of this Truth; *Quia bonum est ex integris causis, malum ex quolibet defectu*. Nothing is good but that which is entirely good, but a thing becomes naught upon any one defect. And this reason, 'tis warranted by *St. James* Chap. ii. 10. *Whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. And the Fathers expreis this Truth by these similitudes. "As a Bird, saith *Chrysostom*, if the snare catch but one of her feet, though her wings be free and ready for flight, yet she is taken, and becomes a prey to the Fowler. "Or, as *Augustine* compares it, though all the parts of our body be sound, save only one, that one diseased and ulcerous part may be deadly to thee. *Cur tot membra sana non valent ad vitam, & unum morbidum valet ad mortem?* "All the sound members, saith he, cannot preserve life; but even one diseased member

Serm. I. member shall hasten thy death. *Agrippa's propemodum*, his *Almost*, nay, *Herod's admodum*, his doing *many things*, all spilt and lost by the retaining of one reigning sin. A little Leaven sours and mars the whole lump. *Take heed of the leaven of Herod*, as Christ forewarns us, even in this sense also. Ye may be like him in the Gospel, *not far from the Kingdom of God*; or like that young man in the Gospel, *one thing is wanting to thee*, and yet come short of Heaven. *Quod ferè fit, non fit*; that which is almost done, is as yet undone.

Ye see *Herod's* insufficiencies in all his progress; *Did many things*, but this would not pass with St. *John* for sound obedience. As Christ spake to the Church in the *Revelation*, *I have somewhat against thee*: so *John* Baptist spares not *Herod* in his beloved sin.

1. See St. *John's* fidelity. For all *Herod's* forwardness, he will not abate him the Commission of one gross sin. *John* is not like the unjust Steward, that could gratify his Master's debtors, instead of an hundred, bid them set down fifty, dispense with him, and allow him the practice of one impiety. Thus St. *Paul* calls upon the *Corinthians* for entire obedience, *2 Cor. viii. 7. As ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; see that you abound in this grace also.* St. *Paul* will not allow them the omission of one Grace or holy Duty.

2. See St. *John's* simplicity. A Politick man would have winked at this one fault of *Herod*, thought it wisdom to preserve his interest with *Herod*; I may prevail much with him, if I hold good terms with him; many good causes may speed the better, if I hold fair with *Herod*; but to deal roughly with him, and affront him in his sin, may set him farther off, no good shall be done with him. No, St. *John's* Piety abhors this Policy. God allows no such compliances upon any such pretences. What faith God to *Ezekiel*? *Thou shalt speak my word to them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are rebellious.*

3. See St. *John's* importunity in admonishing of *Herod*. He tells him plainly of his sin. *Herod* would have him but to hold his peace, he desires not *John* to justify or maintain his Marriage with *Herodias*, or to solemnize, or countenance it, or to dispense with it, as the Pope would have done, had it been in his days; only let it alone, chuse some other Text, press some other Duties, and all shall be well. No, St. *John* dares not forbear the reproof of this great sin, but inveighs against it: *Si pereo, pereo.* *John* must do his duty, though it cost him the loss of *Herod's* favour, I, and his life too. And so it did; and that will give you to see *Herod's* deficiency, to what he falls, even to open persecution.

So then from hence ye may observe these three Truths.

1. *Bare Formality, in matters of Religion, is not lasting.* It will wear off, like some waterish colours that are lightly laid on, will fade and vanish, are of no continuance. As we find this difference 'twixt Artificial and Natural Motions. That which moves naturally, moves continually; because it comes from an inward principle, as the motion and beating of the Pulse: But Artificial Motions may hold for a time, but at last they will cease; because they are moved not from a principle within them, but from some outward cause. As the motion of a Clock, it moves and strikes as long as the Plummets and weight is upon it; but take off the weight, and the Clock stands presently: Such is Formality in Religion; By-respects are like so many Plummets, take them off, and Formality ceaseth.

2. Observe, *One unmortified sin wilfully retained, will eat out all appearances of Vertue and Piety.* *Herod's* esteem of *John* and his Ministry, and his forward performance of many good Duties, are all given over and laid aside at the instance, and command of his sin of Adultery. A reigning sin will not endure the company and consistency of any thing that gives check, and stands in any seeming contrariety to it. *Judas* and *Demas*, and such Saint-like Hypocrites will at last fling off their Masks and Vizors, and appear what they are, prophane worldlings. A Counterfeit Cripple, if it seems for his turn, will cast away his Crutches, and betake him to his legs.

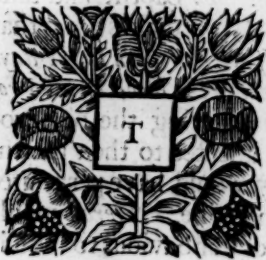
3. *An unmortified sin, rather than be crossed, will fall to persecution.* If *Herod* cannot enjoy his *Herodias* quietly, but *John* will still be objecting it to him; both *Herod* and *Herodias* will ease themselves of this Monitor, *John's* head shall pay for it. Reigning sins will at last prove raging sins, and grow impatient of any reproof. Cast Pearls and precious Truths before fierce Dogs, they will not only trample them under their feet, but will rent and worry you, saith *Christ*, *Matth. vii. 6.*

This is the dreadful downfall of unsoundness in Religion. A false friend to Religion will at last prove an open enemy to it. Should one have told *Herod* when he entertained *John Baptist* with so much courtesie; *Well, the time will come, when you will part with your new Chaplain, and fling him into Prison, and take his head from him:* Sure *Herod* would have answered him as *Hazael* did *Elisha*, *What, dost thou think me a Dog to do so wickedly?* Should one have asked *Herod* and *Herodias* what they thought of *Ahab's* and *Jezebel's* persecuting of *Elias*? No doubt, they would have cried shame of them, as of bloody Persecutors. Here is another *Elias*; *John Baptist* came in the Spirit and power of *Elias*, and reproves *Herod* as the other did *Ahab*; and so *Herod* can imprison *John Baptist*, and take his head from him. 'Tis a good Observation that *Chrysostom* makes upon that place in *St. Matthew*, when the Jews said, *Chap. xxiii. 30.* *If we had been in the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets.* "Mark, saith *Chrysostom*, Dost thou hear men magnifying the old Prophets and Primitive Divines? Observe how they stand affected to their present Ministers. If they malign and persecute them, they would have persecuted even those former servants of God whom they now magnifie. *Herod* would have been an *Ahab*, *Herodias*, a *Jezebel*. That Speech of our Saviour to his Disciples, *John xv. 20.* *If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also,* will admit an inversion: We may say of such men, *If they persecute Christ's Disciples and Servants, they would have persecuted Christ himself also, had he lived in their Times.*

FOUR SERMONS

On 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4

3. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*
4. *In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them.*



HE usual success and entertainment, that the Gospel found in St. Paul's Preaching, the scantling and proportion of it, himself sets down. 1 Cor. xvi. 9. *A great door and effectual, is opened unto me, and there are many Adversaries.* A door was opened, many advantages and opportunities God gave unto him for planting the Gospel: but there were many Adversaries. Satan, that dogg'd him in the course of his Ministry, bred him many hinderances and impediments, stirred up Spirits of Contradiction to oppose and gain-say him. The experience of this various success he found abundantly in preaching at Corinth. He prevailed much there, and converted many. God himself assured him of this success, Acts xviii. 9. *Speak Paul, and bold not thy peace; for I have much People in this City.* And, as the Conversions he wrought there, were many and effectual; so he wanted not for oppositions and contradictions. There were there that questioned his Apostleship, slighted his Abilities, pretended they found no such evidence of Truth, nor excellency in his Gospel, as he bare them in hand: which drew from St. Paul this second Epistle, which he especially intends as his own Apology, and Apology of the Gospel. 'Tis a full account, which he gives of his Authority, Pains, Sincerity, and clear publication of the Gospel. Of all which he had given so full a proof and demonstration, that it could not be weakness and infirmity, but malice, and obstinacy, that made them gain-say it. And therefore his *spirit is stirred within him*, and being armed with all Authority and Severity, he threatens his Gain-sayers with this heavy doom; bids them give over censuring of him, and look well to themselves. He tells them their Unbelief, after so much Preaching, is a shrewd sign they belong not to God; but are meer cast-aways. Such wilful refusal, and opposing of God's Grace, 'tis a token of perdition, Phil. i. 28. *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost.*

The Text then, 'tis a sad and an heavy Censure, that the Apostle passes upon non-proficiency, the unprofitable living under the means of Grace. It sets out the dangerous and desperate condition of obstinate Unbelievers; such as under the clear Preaching of the Gospel continue unconverted; with whom Christ, and his Gospel find no entertainment; they see nothing in it, why they should embrace it, and submit themselves to the truth and power of it.

And in it observe these three Particulars.

- First, Is the Non-proficiency specified and supposed; *If our Gospel be hid.*
- Secondly, Is the Censure and Judgment that is passed upon it; *It is hid to them that are lost*: 'Tis a sign, they are cast-away.
- Thirdly, Is the true Cause of their non-proficiency assigned.

First, Is the Original and natural in-bred Cause in themselves, that's Infidelity; a Voluntary Unbelief, that's the Cause that breeds it.

Secondly,

Secondly, Is a Cause that encreases this Nonproficiency of Unbelief, that is, Spiritual Blindness inflicted and wrought into them; *Their minds are blinded.*

Thirdly, Is the Author an Worker of this Blindness, that's the Devil; *The god of this world.*

Fourthly, Is his End and Purpose, why he blinds mens minds; *Lest the Gospel should shine into them, and they should be converted.*

And this assigning of these Causes of their Unproficiency, removes other pretended and false-supposed Causes of their Unbelief. They must be one of these three.

I. They will say, God he conceals himself from them. No, 'tis the *God of this world*, not the true God. He propounds himself to be known in Christ as his lively Image.

II. They pretend, The Gospel is dark and mysterious. No, that's full of Light, of glorious Light.

III. They say, The Apostle is obscure in propounding it to them. No, it shines evidently to them in his Preaching, and would shine into them, would they but open their eyes, view, and behold it. So, 'tis not God, not the Gospel, not the Apostle, that causes this darkness of Unbelief in them.

The first thing considerable is the pretended Obscurity of the Gospel, and so their Unproficiency supposed; *If our Gospel be hid.*

Here are three Words, and so three things considerable.

First, Is the special Truth which St. Paul labours to free from obscurity, and the Unproficiency under which he thus heavily sentences; that's the Gospel.

Secondly, Is the special Relation and Interest that St. Paul claims to this blessed Truth; he calls it, *Our Gospel.*

Thirdly, Is the Imputation that is charged upon this Truth, which he labours to remove, that's Obscurity; *If it be hidden.*

First, Paul pleads for the Gospel, censures them that are wilfully ignorant of it; tells them, 'tis a sign of Perdition, not to take notice of the Truth and Glory of it; and he had just reason to do it.

I. The Gospel, and the justifying of it, was *summum officium*, it was the main Scope and End of his Ministry. His Employment was the publishing of the glad Tidings of the Gospel, the *Preaching of Repentance towards God; and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, Acts xx. 21. His Function and Office was, *to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*, Ver. 24. *the making known the Gospel of our Salvation*, Ephes. i. 13. He magnifies this his Ministry and Apostleship, Rom. xi. 13. He accounts himself set in *apologiam Evangelii*, for the defence of the Gospel, Phil. i. 17.

That's Paul's Calling, that's ours. *We are Ministers of the New Testament*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Here is the sum and substance of what we preach, and what you should believe, that *God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*. We are therefore God's Embassadors, and *beseech you to be reconciled unto God*, 2 Cor. v. 19. An Embassador, in point of Honour, must maintain his Commission, avow the Truth and Authority of it. And our Ambassage, 'tis *the Word of Reconciliation, the Tidings of the Gospel*; 'tis the Sum of all our Preaching.

If Paul preaches the Law, he doth it still in reference to the Gospel.

1. To convince you of your great necessity to lay hold on the Gospel, by shewing you the impossibility of performing the Law.

2. To enforce you to fly to the Sanctuary of the Gospel, so to escape the Curse of the Law.

3. To direct you how to live under the Gospel, by that Rule of Holiness prescribed in the Law. But yet all is for the advancing the Gospel. *Moses* and *Elias* must wait upon Christ on the Mount. Law and Prophets, all are subordinate and serviceable to the Gospel.

II. Paul maintains the Dignity of the Gospel, threatens our Unproficiency under it; because the Gospel, it is *clarissimum medium salutis*, the most clear, evident, convincing Means of Salvation. They might more excusably have charged Obscurity upon the Law of *Moses*; there was some Darkness in that Ministration.

Serm. I.

But the Gospel is revealed in all evidence and manifestation. In it *the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith*, Rom. i. 17. Clearer and clearer; in it the way to Heaven is laid open. The Law, 'tis like *Moses*, that had a *veil on his face* when he came from the Mount: The Gospel like *Christ on the Mount*, his garments shine gloriously. There is a light in the Law; but the Gospel, 'tis far more lightsome and resplendent. As in the Creation, God made two great lights, the Moon and the Sun; the less light to rule the night, the greater light to rule the day: so in the Church, God hath set up two great lights; the Law, that's like the light of the Moon; but we live under the Sun-shine of the Gospel. They are blind that cannot see by Sun-shine. There may be dark spots in the Moon, there are none in the Sun.

III. *Paul* is sharp and severe against those that are unproficient under the Gospel; because the Gospel, 'tis *potentissimum organum salutis*, the most powerful and effectual means and instrument, to work our conversion. In respect of this, the Law was impotent and weak; *It made nothing perfect*, Heb. vii. 19. Like the light and beams of the Moon; *Lunæ radiis non maturefcit Botrus*: nothing grows or ripens by it. The Moon conveys no vital heat. But the Gospel, 'tis the most active and lively instrument of God, Rom. i. 16. 'Tis the power of God to salvation. *Isaiah* calls it the arm of the Lord, *Isai. liii. 1*. God accompanies the word of the Gospel with the efficacy of his Spirit. The Law administered no strength; required all, but helped nothing; but the Gospel, 'tis the *ministration of the Spirit*. *St. Paul* demands this of the *Galatians*, Chapter 3. joyns with the false Apostles upon this issue; *This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?* When the Gospel is preach'd, then the power of God is present to heal us. His Spirit then strives with us, and puts forth it self to work our conversion. When that is rendred to us, and we refuse it; then God saith, *What can I do more than I have done to save you?*

Secondly, The second thing considerable is *St. Paul's* claim and interest in the Gospel; he calls it *Our Gospel*. It may seem to be a title of diminution and disparagement, to denominate the Gospel from any man; When men strive for the name of the Gospel, call it by the name of *John*, *The Grace of God*. What *Christ* said of *John's* Baptism, we may say of the Gospel, *Is it from Heaven, or from men?* No doubt from Heaven. And *St. Paul* elsewhere ascribes it to an higher Author and owner; he calls it *The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Thess. iv. 8. So, and more than so, he gives it a more magnificent Title, 1 Tim. i. 11. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed God; the Gospel of the everlasting God*, Rom. xvi. 26. 'Tis true; and yet *Paul* calls it here *Our Gospel*; So 2 Thess. iii. 14. *He called you by our Gospel*; and Rom. ii. 16. there he calls it *my Gospel*.

I. 'Tis *Paul's* Gospel, it was *fidei commissum*, it was committed to *St. Paul's* care and trust: and so this word, *Our Gospel*, 'tis *vox fidelitatis*; he owns the Gospel as his chief charge, that which he was mainly intrusted withal; *καὶ πνευματικόν*: that good thing which was committed to you, keep, saith *Paul* to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. i. 14. He, 1 Tim. i. 11. calls it *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust*. And how thankfully he took this trust, the next Verse shews: he blesses *Christ* for counting him faithful, and putting him into the Ministry. Let a man so judge of us, as the Stewards of God; think neither too high, nor too low of us; not owners, but yet Stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and 'tis required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. *Paul* is not the Testator; but yet he is the Executor of the bequeathments of the Gospel. He flights not this trust, but owns it thankfully.

II. *Our Gospel*, *St. Paul* counts the Gospel, his Gospel; 'tis *vox amoris*, 'tis a speech and expression of Love and Affection. *Amor appropriat*, 'tis the property of Love to appropriate what it loves, and to account it its own. 'Twas so with *St. Paul*: the Gospel, 'twas his chief joy and love, all worldly things were vile to him in respect of that. Hear with what affection he speaks of the Gospel; *Neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my Ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*, Acts xx. 24. He would do any thing, suffer any thing for the Gospel's sake.

III. Our

III. *Our Gospel*, 'tis *vox contestationis*, a speech of Challenge and Contestation: he claims and challenges the Gospel to himself, against all carping opposers, against all false Apostles. Such there were in the Church of *Corinth*, that despised *Paul's* Preaching, boasted of their learning and eloquence: Well, saith *St. Paul*, let them challenge what they will to themselves, the Gospel is ours, he will not yield that to them. Such false workers he met withal, *Gal. ii. 5. To whom he would not give place, no not for an hour, that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with them. Periculosum est in rebus Dei jure suo cedere*; he assumes this to himself, let them preach never so learnedly, or eloquently, and plausibly, he is sure he preached the truth of the Gospel. In all contentions, let's keep this hold. Let Hereticks and Papists, and Schismatics, carried away in their popular insinuations, challenge all other excellencies of Wit, Learning, Eloquence: but be sure thou yield not the honour of Truth to them; the Gospel is ours.

IV. *Our Gospel*; 'tis *vox certitudinis*, 'tis a speech of Confidence and full Assurance. *Paul* is assured the thing that he preached unto them, was the truth of the Gospel. *Paul's* Preaching, and *Christ's* Gospel were *termini convertibiles*, they were all one. He might safely say, that they that rejected his Doctrine, opposed the Gospel, and would prove Cast-aways.

1. His preaching was infallible, he was guided by an unerring Spirit. He is confident of this, that if an *Angel from Heaven* should contradict him, he pronounces a curse on him. There was no chaff, nor hay, nor stubble, that he built upon the foundation; but all rich precious Truth. See with what assurance he seals up his Doctrine, *1 Cor. xiv. 14. If any man be a Prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things, that I write, to be the Commandments of the LORD. He preached nothing but the Oracles of God.*

2. His Preaching was with all evidence, he concealed nothing; but acquainted the Churches with the whole counsel of God. He warned every man, persuaded every man; and this he did with all evidence and demonstration of the spirit. He put not on a veil over his face, as *Moses* did, *2 Cor. iii. 13*. His preaching was so clear and evident, that he tells the *Galathians*, that *Christ* was evidently set forth before their eyes, and crucified amongst them. They could not say of him, as the people did of *Ezekiel*; *Ab! Lord God, they say of me, Doth not he speak Parables?* Chap. xx. 49.

3. His Preaching was ratified with the greatest confirmation;

1. Of open Sanctity. His Life gave testimony to his Doctrine; he lived the Gospel, as well as he preached it.

2. Of inward Sincerity. He had no sinister fetches to gain upon them, to preach *Christ* into their hearts, and himself into their purses. It had the confirmation,

3. Of Miracles. The signs of an Apostle were wrought amongst them in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds, *2 Cor. xii. 12*. and gave testimony to *St. Paul's* preaching.

4. That which he esteemed above Miracles, he had suffered persecutions for this Truth; born the marks of the Lord *Jesus* in his body, which none of these carping false Apostles would do. They were all for self-preservation; *Paul* for self-denial. He was a willing and joyful partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel.

4. *Paul's* Preaching was most successful. This he calls the seal of his Ministry. The grace of God wrought wonderfully by him. He wrought mighty conversions, gained more to *Christ*, than all the Apostles, trampled down Satan, havocked his Kingdom, converted Idolaters, Thieves, Murderers, Sodomites; and that in *Corinth*. Who converted the *Corinthians*, but *Paul*? Who, but he, turned them from Idols to the living God? Certainly, they that cannot be wrought upon by such a Gospel, so preached, so confirmed, so effectual of such Conversions, have just cause to suspect themselves, and fear they are not such as belong to God: Otherwise *Paul's* preaching, so infallible, so evident, so confirmed in others, so powerful and effectual, would have prevailed with them.

Thirdly, The third thing Considerable is the Imputation, which is cast upon the Gospel, that it is hid and obscure; and the Apostle seems in some part to grant it, there is some obscurity and darkness in it.

Serm. I.

The Enquiry then must be, How far forth it is so, and to whom it is so? Take it in these following Assertions.

I. 'Tis true, the Gospel in it self, in its own nature, is a hidden, a secret, close, reserved thing. 'Tis the Mystery of God, locked up in his secret Counsel, naturally unknown to Men or Angels. The Moral Law, 'tis evident by Nature, written in Mens Hearts; but the Gospel is a meer Novelty to Nature. 'Tis a *Mystery kept secret since the world began*, Rom. xvi. 26. *a Mystery in former ages not made known to the sons of men*, Ephes. iii. 5. *a Mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations*, Colos. i. 26. *a Mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*, Ephes. iii. 9. So 'tis naturally unknown to us.

II. Even after God hath published it by his Son, yet still it is an hidden, obscure thing to every natural man. The natural man perceives not the Mysteries of the Gospel, he cannot discern them; they are above and beyond his reach and capacity. The Soul must have a new spiritual Light put into it, to be able to see the Truth of the Gospel, *Flesh and blood cannot reveal it*, Matth. xvi. 17. *No man can say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. Men may be a Law to themselves, but not a Gospel to themselves. Nature can see the Light of the Moral Law, but not the Mysteries of the Gospel. *The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they seem foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery*. Let it shine never so clearly, our natural blindness cannot perceive it. *The light shined in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not*, John i. 5.

III. The Gospel in some measure and degree is hid and obscure, even to the Saints of God. Take it in three degrees.

1. The Gospel hath in it some depths and secrets, which no Saint of God may thoroughly search into. They are called *the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, Ephes. iii. 8. S. Paul, that great Diver, stood amazed at them, passes over disputation, falls to admiration, cried out, *Oh! the depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, his ways are past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. The Mystery of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of Christ, of God's Election, the Works of God's Grace, the Mystery of Glory, all these to be adored by Faith, but not comprehended.

2. The Gospel hath some obscurity in it, even as the Scripture propounds it, and reveals it to us. Indeed the most vital and necessary Truths are plainly expressed. *The entrance into thy Word gives light, even to the simple*, saith David. But yet the Scripture is so framed, that even in the Gospel, that lightsome Body, there are some obscurities, *some things hard to be understood*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. Some depths in Scripture beyond the largest capacity.

3. There is in the Knowledge of God's Saints much obscurity and imperfection.

1. The manner of their Knowledge, 'tis by Faith; and that's a Grace that is joined with obscurity. Faith takes up Truth upon trust, hath not an evident comprehension of it. 'Tis but the knowledge of a Child, not of a grown Man. We see but the back part of Christ here; we do not yet behold him *face to face*.

2. There is some culpable ignorance and darkness in the Saints of God; they know not so much of the Gospel as they should know, and might know. Christ charges his Disciples with this fault, *Luke xxiv. 25. O fools, and slow of heart to believe that the Prophets have written!* S. Paul tells the Corinthians, that they were but *babes in knowledge*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. *children of understandings, unskilful in the Word of righteousness*, Heb. v. 13.

IV. 'Tis true, that for all this hiddenness of the Gospel, yet even those that are but wicked men, *Sons of Perdition*, may attain to some kind of knowledge in the Gospel; nay, to a great ability of understanding. Balaam may prophetic of Christ, Judas may preach him; many a Cast-away may understand more in the Scripture, than many a Saint. Nay, the Devil searches more deeply into the Scriptures than the learnedst Clerk of them all. Satan can make as Catholicick and as Orthodox confession of Christ, as Peter himself, *I know who thou art, even the*

the Holy One of God, Mark i. 24. All this Knowledge, 'tis worthless, and we may still say, *The Gospel, 'tis hid from them.*

Serm. I.

1. A wicked man may have *intelligentiam verborum*, but not *rerum*. He may understand the Words of Scripture, but not the Things contained in them. As when a Friend writes a Letter of secret Counsel to his Friend, a Stranger may open it, and read it, and understand the *English* of every word; but yet not apprehend the Secrets of that Letter: so, in the Scriptures there are Words, and there are Mysteries couch'd under these Words, which are revealed only to the Saints. *The secrets of the LORD are revealed to them that fear him*, Psal. xxv. 14. A wicked man is not acquainted with the mind of God. As *Jonathan's* Page understood his Master's Words; *David* only understood his Meaning. As, when God spake to Christ, *John* xii. 29. *they said, it thundred*; they heard the Sound, but not the Sense of what was spoken.

2. Suppose a wicked man may know those things that are in the Scriptures, yet his knowledge of them is not *cognitio spiritualis*, he hath no spiritual apprehensions of them. All the knowledge he hath, 'tis but natural and carnal; he can go as far as the helps of Nature, and his own natural Understanding can carry him, and accordingly he conceives: but where Reason stops, he stops too. He hath no spiritual Judgment to discern these supernatural Truths; but he judges of them in a carnal manner. What a gross misapprehension had *Nicodemus* of spiritual Regeneration? How fondly did the *Capernaitans* mistake the Mystery of our spiritual feeding on the Body of Christ? Carnal men, they see these Truths in *specie aliena*, but not *in propria*, not in their own true appearance. As he that looks upon a Map, judges of foreign Countries by some imaginations he fancies to himself, not by an immediate clear apprehension of the Places themselves.

3. Suppose a wicked man may have a spiritual knowledge of the Mysteries of the Gospel, *si spiritualis*, yet 'tis *notionalis*, *non notitia cum affectu*. An unregenerate man may attain to some supernatural knowledge of Divine Truths; but his knowledge of them, 'tis merely notional; not cordial and affectionate, and with sense and feeling. He hath a conceit of them, it may be, by some general light; but it rests only in notion, it swims in the brain, and there it dies. They may be Christians from their shoulders upwards; their heads may conceive Religion, and their tongue talk of it: but it is far from their reins, the region of the heart is wholly void of it. But the apprehensions of a Saint are cordial and affectionate; *They know in all their hearts, and in all their souls*, as *Joshua* speaks, *Ch. xxiii. 14*. A good Christian sucks out the sweetness of these Truths. There is *notitia per visum*, a kind of gazing knowledge, which wicked men may have: but a good Christian hath *notitiam per gustum*; they taste and feed on the sweetness of Scripture. And this,

1. 'Tis more certain.

2. 'Tis more comfortable. As a man may guess at the goodness of Wine by the colour, but better by the taste; that's a surer and more refreshing apprehension. The one knows it in bare speculation; the other, by an inward sense, and feeling apprehension. They rest not in a vanishing relish, but they do thoroughly digest and conceit it. The Nurse tastes the Food, but the Child feeds on it. As *S. Gregory* speaks of *Balaam's* enlightnings; *Delicias spirituales gustavit Balaam, sed mox ore expuit*: it touch'd his palate, but went no further. As the speculative knowledge of evil makes a man never the worse; so the bare knowledge of good makes him never the better. A man may taste poyson, and it will not hurt him; and if he do but taste meat, it will not nourish him. The Physician will taste the Physick, and spit it out; but the Patient must down with it, receive it into his bowels, or it doth no good. *Fac me, Domine, gustare per amorem quod gusto per agnitionem; sentiam per affectum, quod sentio per intellectum.* Aug. We come,

Secondly, To the Censure and Judgment that the Apostle passes upon those that can see nothing in the Gospel, to whom 'tis an hidden thing. And that Censure, 'tis sad and heavy. Their unbelief, 'tis a sign of perdition; *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost.*

And

Serm. I.

And here are two things considerable.

First, Is the Doom, he passes upon them; he tells them, *They are lost*.

Secondly, Is the manner of denouncing this Doom and Sentence upon them.

First, The Doom and Censure is, that *they are lost*.

What means that? How shall we estimate the heaviness of this burden? what doth it import? we must know, that the Scripture accounts us lost many ways.

I. We are lost in our original, as we are all the children and off-spring of Adam. We all fell from God in him by his first transgression, all went astray in that Sin. Adam put us to a lost condition, we were all involved in *massa perditionis*. Lost we were from the birth, from the womb, from the conception; all of us lay in that mass of perdition.

II. Every sin we commit is a farther loss of us. The life of a Sinner, 'tis a continual losing of himself, he plunges himself into more perdition. Thus David describes the condition of sinners, *Psal. lvi. 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray, as soon as they be born*. He confesses it of himself; *I have gone astray like a lost Sheep*, *Psal. cxix. 176*. Thus our Saviour tells us what was the condition of us all; *The Son of man came to save, and seek that which was lost*, *Matth. xviii. 11. He was sent to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*. Every wicked man loses and undoes himself.

III. There is yet a farther loss, that's a loss of Sentence and Judgment; when a Sinner is cast in Law, when Sentence of Condemnation is past upon him, he hath incurred that heavy curse, which God's Law threatens against offenders. This is every wicked man's condition; God's Law, that casts him, the curse of it pursues him; by virtue of that Sentence we are all undone, and lost; all of us are *civiliter mortui*, dead, and cast, and lost men in Law. That shuts up all men in Condemnation.

These three,

I. The loss of natural corruption.

II. The loss of sinful Transgression.

III. The loss of legal Malediction: No man is free from them; so all are lost.

True, but the Gospel comes to recover us out of these losses; *There is hope in Israel*, as concerning this loss. *Christ came to seek and save that which was thus lost*. There is hope to be recovered out of these losses, and fetched back again. Many have been so, many shall be so. But this loss, which St. Paul speaks of, 'tis the dismal, final, irrecoverable loss, beyond all redemption.

It implies three things.

1. A loss *in decreto*. They that will not obey the Gospel, are lost in God's account and estimation, nay, more than so, they are lost in his purpose and resolution. He hath passed upon such a decree of perdition. And what saith Job? *If he cuts off, or shuts out, who can hinder him?* He finds them lost, and so he leaves them, resolves to pass by them, not to recover them; he sets the brand of his hatred upon them. Such the Scripture calls *Reprobates, Cast-aways, Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, Sons of Perdition*. They are *περνητοι*, bill'd and book'd up for destruction. They, to whom the Gospel doth no good, that will not embrace it, are thus lost, appointed to Perdition.

2. There is a loss *in statu*. Such as refuse the Gospel, they are in an actual state of Perdition. *John Baptist* describes their woful state and condition: *The wrath of God abides upon them*, *John iii. 36*. They that will not lay hold on the offers of Grace, such, are stray'd and lost beyond recovery. Those whom the Gospel cannot find and recover, ye may give them for lost, they are undone for ever. *The lost Groat*, the Gospel can find; *the lost sheep*, the Gospel can bring back again; *the lost Son*, the Gospel can entertain again: but those that repel these benefits of the Gospel, there is no hope of them.

3. There is a loss *in eventu*. Were it but the loss of Heaven, without any other misery, 'twere an heavy doom, as *Augustine* discourses. "Should God say, "Thou shalt escape all plagues and punishments here, and hereafter, *tantum faciem* "meam non videbis, it would be an heavy damnation. But these are so lost, as they are, and shall be destroyed. *Ἀπόλλυται* is not barely to be lost and gone; but to be undone

undone and destroyed. The stray Sheep was lost, but not worried, and devoured; but this loss is a loss of destruction, they are utterly ruined, miserably undone. As *Jacob* conceived of *Joseph*, he had not only lost him, but reckons of him as destroyed. *A cruel beast hath devoured him, Joseph is dead, torn in pieces.* Such is the loss of unbelievers: those whom the Gospel recovers not, come not only short of Heaven, but fall unavoidably into the jaws of Hell; utter desolation and vengeance shall be poured upon them. *Such are vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.* Think not, nor imagine to thy self a tolerable condition, though thou mis of Heaven. *Regnare nolo, sufficit mihi salvum esse,* Aug. Though I mis of Heaven, I hope to do well enough, though in a meaner condition. No, if the Gospel do not convert thee, it will confound thee; it will be either thy bliss, or thy bane; it will either help thee to Heaven, or sink thee to the pit and bottom of Hell.

We have seen the Doom and Censure which the Apostle passes upon Unbelievers; Now let's take notice of,

Secondly, The manner of Denouncing of it; *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost.*

And for the manner of Denouncing this sentence, take notice of three qualifications in it.

I. This form of denouncing of it is hypothetical, by way of supposal only, if there be any such. And this form and manner of expression carries with it a secret exprobration and upbraiding of the sin of Infidelity. As if he should say, *'Tis strange and wonderful, that after so much preaching, there should any remain ignorant, unteachable, unconverted; 'tis almost incredible men should neglect so great salvation.* Had any other mystery been taught them, of less advantage than this mystery of the Gospel, would they have continued ignorant of it? Nay, how attentive, how apprehensive, how studious, how proficient and forward would they have been to have learn'd and practis'd it? and shall the Gospel, the mystery of salvation, be the only neglected thing? It made our Saviour wonder at it, when he preached at *Nazareth*, and saw so little good done, *He marvelled at their unbelief,* Mark vi. 6.

II This form of Denunciation, 'tis illative, brought in by way of proof and inference. 'Tis not an immediate Principle, clear in it self; but he expresses it by way of illation and deduction. *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost.* If men continue ignorant and disobedient to the Gospel, if impenitent and unbelievers, then the Apostle from thence infers this conclusion, Such men are Cast-aways. 'Tis not in the nature of an immediate absolute Prediction, but by the way of menacing and commination, and upon presupposal of their unbelief.

This is the renour of the Gospel; this is the Sum of our Commission. We cannot give out copies of God's Decrees, give men an immediate assurance of Heaven; or seal up unto them their final perdition: but we must proceed by a just inference from those qualifications and conditions, which the Gospel expresses. We search not the Records of Heaven, but the Books of the Scriptures. And that bids us say to the righteous, *It shall go well with thee:* and to say, *Wo the wicked, It shall be ill with thee,* Isai. iii. 10. That gives us warrant to assure you, if you repent, and believe, and live holily, you are elected, and shall be saved: If you persist in ignorance and impiety, and will not lay hold on Christ and his Gospel, you are lost and Cast-aways. We preach not God's secret counsels, which are absolute: but the promises and threatnings of the Gospel, which are conditional.

III. This form of Sentence, 'tis suspensive and general; *If it be hid, 'tis hid to them that are lost.* This Thunderbolt hovers over their heads in a dismal cloud of generality. The Apostle fastens it upon no man's person in particular. *St. Paul*, no doubt, had the Spirit of discerning incorrigible sinners; but forbears to discover them. He points not out, who are lost, cast-aways, reprobates; to teach us, not to pass peremptory sentence concerning any man's reprobation, or perdition. As far as threatnings reach, so we may, and must affright men; but we have no warrant, to say, *Thou art a reprobate.* We must warn every man, and tell them of their dangers; but not absolutely conclude, they are destined to destruction. *Non bis commisit congregationem, sibi reservavit separationem.* He must separate the Goats from

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from the Sheep, that cannot mistake them. Nay, we are allowed to bring home the Mercies and Promises of God more near and close than we are his Judgments, *Deut. xxvii. 12, 13. They shall stand upon mount Gerazim to bless the people, and they shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse.* 'Tis not said, to curse the people. Applications of Blessings may be more particular and personal, than denouncing of Curses. *S. Paul, 1 Cor. xvi. sends personal Salutations and Benedictions to the Saints; Salute Aquila, and Priscilla, and the Church in their house:* but when he is on Mount Ebal, he denounces Curses in general, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* That Curse breaks in the air, he fastens it not upon any ones Person.

And so from this Sentence thus denounced, the Observation is thus much; *That Ignorance of the Gospel, and Unproficiency under the Ministry of it, 'tis a fearful sign of a Cast-away, a token of Perdition.* Such an one had need look to himself, lest he prove a Reprobate.

See the truth of this in three Particulars; in respect,

1. Of the Want of the Gospel,
2. Of the Neglect of the Gospel.
3. Of the Rejection of the Gospel. These leave them in a condition of damnation.

1. Single Ignorance (which is *carentia remedii*) of Christ's Gospel, is damnable. Such a man lies in the state of damnation. Not only the neglecting, but even the wanting of the Means of Salvation, exposes us to Perdition. As a man that's sick of a deadly Disease, not only the refusal of the sovereign Medicine to cure him, but the bare want of it, makes him irrecoverable. Ignorance, 'tis the Hold of Satan, where he keeps his Captives in Chains of Darkness. 'Tis the Shadow of Death; the very Border, and Suburbs, and In-let into Hell. Thus *Paul* describes the sad estate of men ignorant of Christ, *Ephes. iv. 18. having their understandings darkened, and strangers from the Life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.*

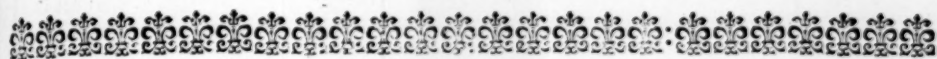
See this by the contrary; Saving Knowledge, 'tis a sign of God's Love, that he means well to us: *God would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4.* 'Tis a sign of his special Love in Election; *To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, alius non, Matth. xiii. 11.* This Knowledge, 'tis the first step towards Heaven; *By this knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, Isa. liii. 11.* 'Tis a sign we belong to God; *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts iii. 48. My sheep hear my voice, John x. 16. You therefore hear not, because you are not of God.* Wouldst thou get an hopeful Sign to thy self, that thou belongest to God? Get this Token, *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his Will.* And on the contrary, the Prophet *Isaiah's* speech is of 'ad abode, *They are a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them shall have no mercy on them, Isa. xxvii. 11.*

2. A second Point is, *Wilful, and careless, and supine Ignorance* (which is *neglectus remedii*) when the Gospel is offered and tendered to us, that's worse. The other left them, this puts them in a damnable estate. Such an one is in a dangerous condition; his end is suspicious, he hath a shrewd sign upon him of perdition. When God continues calling, and still we turn the deaf ear to him; when we are willingly and wilfully ignorant, Christ makes that a fearful sign of a Reprobate. *Therefore ye hear not, because ye are not of God, John viii. 47.* The hearing ear, that which is swift to hear, 'tis a good sign of Grace. But when thine ear is heavy, like the *deaf Adder, that will not hear the Charmer, charm he never so wisely,* such a man is too too likely to prove a Cast-away.

3. A third Point is, *Obstinate, resolved, and final Ignorance* (which is *rejection remedii*) and contempt of the Gospel; 'tis an infallible mark, an evident token of perdition, a certain forerunner of damnation. When we live out the Patience of God, when men come to that deadly period of Infidelity, after all means used, then God's Spirit will no more strive nor wrestle with us, wait no longer upon the hardness of our hearts. *Because I have called, and ye refused, and have hated the knowledge of God; therefore I will laugh at your destruction.* See how *S. Paul* gives over such hopeless wretches, *Acts xiii. 46.* When the Jews grew obstinate, what saith *S. Paul*? Seeing you

you put the Word of God from you, and judge your selves unworthy of eternal life, lo! *Serm. II.*
we turn to the Gentiles; he leaves them to die and perish in their sins.

We may invert the Apostle's Speech, 1 Cor. i. 18. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; and say, They to whom it is foolishness, shall perish.* The Natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. He receives them not, not because he accounts them too high and sublime for him; but he rejects them out of scorn, as things below him, counts them foolishness. 'Tis not, as Solomon saith, *Wisdom is too high for a fool*, and therefore he refuses it; but wisdom is with him, and the Gospel is foolishness, and so he despises it. Talk to an unlearned man of some Points of Philosophy, he will say, he cannot receive them, they are beyond his capacity: but here talk of Christ and the Gospel, they reject it, because 'tis foolishness, too low for them. Here is the contumely, which Infidelity offers to the Gospel; not only refuses it, but contemns it.




The Second

S E R M O N

On 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light—

 E proceed,

Thirdly, To the Causes of this their Unproficiency. Indeed, the Text discovers to us a concurrence of all the Causes of a Sinner's Perdition. Here is not *aurea*, but *ferrea Catena*, the several links of that Iron Chain, that lets down a Sinner into the bottomless pit: the several steps, and stairs, by which he descends into the place of torment.

First, God finds him lost in sin, and so he leaves him; he sees him involved in the mass of Perdition, and resolves to pass by him, not to recover him.

Secondly, A second step is voluntary Infidelity, a wilful neglect and contempt of the Gospel and means of salvation.

Thirdly, A third is a thralldom to Satan. Wilful unbelief gives Satan possession of him, and power over him.

Fourthly, A fourth step that's *Blindness of mind*. They would not believe; and therefore they shall not believe: Satan bores out their eyes, casts them into a spiritual Lethargie, and an utter incapacity; and that brings them to a final, and desperate, and irrecoverable condition, *The Gospel shall not shine into them, that they may be saved.*

It remains now, that we speak,

First, Of the natural, inbred cause of this Unproficiency, that's *Unbelief*. 'Tis that which makes all means of Grace unprofitable. An unbelieving heart is unteachable, it frustrates all offers of Grace, and makes them unsuccessful. This is the reason, why the Gospel could do no good upon the Jews: *Heb. iv. 2. The word preached did not profit them, not being mingled with faith in them that heard it.* He compares the Gospel to some sovereign Medicine, which must not be taken down alone; but tempered and mixed with some liquor that may carry it down, and

Serm. II. shed it abroad into every part: so Faith, it hath *vim diaphoreticam*, 'tis *vehiculum verbi*. We must mix the Word with Faith; that will quicken and convey it into every part of the Soul, make it powerful and effectual. Infidelity, that makes it unprofitable; nay, of a sovereign Medicine, it turns it into a deadly poison. Therefore St. Paul calls the Gospel, the *Word of Faith*, Rom. x. 8. 'Tis a word that Faith only makes use of.

This sin of Infidelity makes a stop of our Conversion at the very beginning, destroys the first conceptions of Grace. An unbelieving heart, 'tis like some ill-conditioned, cold, barren ground, that chills and deadens the seed, as soon as it is sown, it makes it rot in the furrows, never to spring up, or come to maturity.

'Tis a sin to be striven against, because 'tis exceeding natural, exceeding hard to be removed and cured, exceeding dangerous and pernicious; like some noysome Weed, no good thing can grow where it spreads and prospers.

I. 'Tis a sin exceeding natural. 'Twas that sin that gave us the first slip in our first fall, when we all fell from God in Adam. While by Faith he held hold on God, and stuck to his word, he was out of danger, he was impregnable; but when Satan made him let go that hold, and by Infidelity to call God's Word in question, then he wrought his fall and ruine presently. And it being the first, it became the most natural sin. The Devil hath a *Probatum est* set upon that temptation. We are so prone to unbelief, that we had rather listen to Satan dissuading, than to God himself perswading of us to believe the Gospel. "No marvel, saith Augustine, men look not up to these Heavenly Truths, *quia in terrena proni, dorsum eorum semper incurvum est*: their backs and necks are bowed downwards, they cannot look upwards and behold the Gospel.

And this native ill quality of Unbelief shews it self specially in refusing the Gospel. Infidelity is never so perverse and obstinate, as against Christ and his Gospel; we will sooner believe any thing than that. Three reasons of it,

1. *Rerum altitudo*. The Gospel propounds very high, sublime Mysteries, Truths that are exceeding spiritual and divine. The Mystery of godliness in the Gospel, 'tis the most refined wisdom of all Truths. Now the Soul of man by Infidelity is so bowed down, that it measures all Truths by sense, or at most, by reason. It will not believe God further than it sees him. But the Gospel delivers Truths that reason cannot reach to; *Depths of wisdom: We speak the Wisdom of God in a mystery*, 1 Cor. ii. 7. The lowest and first Rudiments of Christianity are inconceivable to flesh and blood; how much more the more high and sublime? See this in Christ's dispute with Nicodemus, Joh. iii.

(1.) Nicodemus was no obstinate, perverse man; he was content to hear and learn.

(2.) He was no meer Infidel or Pagan; he had been long in the Usher's Form, under the Pædagogic of the Law.

(3.) He was no smatterer or Novice in it; but a great Proficient, a *Master in Israel*.

(4.) The Doctrine Christ instructs him in, was one of the first Principles and Rudiments in Christianity, the Doctrine of Regeneration. And yet how dull and unapprehensive was he? *How can these things be?* How grossly did he conceive of these Mysteries? If he be so incapable of these lower and easier Truths, how can the deeper Mysteries of Religion go down with him? *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not; how shall you believe, if I tell you of Heavenly?* John. iii. 12. Infidelity refuses the Gospel upon a second pretence; that's

2. *Mediorum improbabilitas*. The means of Salvation, which the Gospel propounds, seem to an Unbeliever exceeding unlikely and improbable, and so he refuseth them. Here is the perverseness of Infidelity; some things are too high in the Gospel, he cannot reach to them: again, some things seem too mean and low, he cannot stoop to them. That God should be incarnate and become a poor man, Infidelity laughs at it: *Citiùs apud illos Jupiter Taurus, quàm Deus homo*, Tertul. That our Saviour should be crucified, and by such a death save us, it cannot sink into him. *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Gentiles foolishness*:

foolishness: The one stumbles at it, the other spurns at it: The one makes it a stumbling block, the other a mocking stock. The meanness of Christ's Person, 'tis a great quarrel and offence to Infidelity. His own Country-men slighted him: *They were offended at him*, Mat. xiii. 57. *How can this man save us?* they set him at naught. So all the means of Grace, Infidelity judges them poor and contemptible. The Preaching of the Word, 'tis but foolishness to them. Many a man that gives us the hearing, I fear, laughs in his sleeve at us. The Sacraments, how unlikely to be *infaudibula gratiae*, conveyances of Grace to us? A sprinkling of water to cleanse the soul; a taste of Bread and Wine, to nourish us to life eternal. *Naaman the Syrian*, is the Pattern of Infidelity, he scorns God's way, and can tell a better of his own: *I had thought thus and thus, what means dipping seven times in Jordan? Are not the Rivers of Damascus as healthful and Sovereign?* There is another reason that makes us thus backward to believe the Gospel, and that is,

3. *Conscientiae reatus*. The heart of every man by nature is full of privy guiltiness, conscious to himself, that all is not well 'twixt God and him; and that makes his heart draw back by unbelief, and not embrace the Gospel. This guiltiness of Conscience that God is become our enemy, that Heaven and we are at variance, makes a man start and be shie at any appearances of God, at any message or tidings from him. As an indebted man or malefactor, is afraid at the sight of an Officer, he thinks he comes to apprehend him: as *Ahab* was troubled at the sight of a Prophet, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* It makes a wicked man tremble at any tidings from God. He looks upon Christ as the Devil did, *O! art thou come to torment us?* Doth God speak to him? require any duty of him? he says, as *Ahab* did, *See how he picks a quarrel against me*, 2 Kings v. 7. He looks upon the Scripture, nay the Gospel (the Patent of Mercy and Pardon, an Act of Oblivion and Indemnity) as a Writ to arrest him, as the very Neck-verte of his Condemnation. Tell him, that God is willing to treat with him of Reconciliation; yea, that he hath given his Son to die for him, it cannot sink into his heart to believe it, 'tis too good news to be true. His guilty heart mis-gives him; *God is mine enemy, he cannot mean so well to me*: it makes him refuse to come in. As Traitors and Rebels that reject Pardon; they will fight it out, they look for no mercy. That's the first, Infidelity is a sin exceeding natural.

II. 'Tis a sin exceeding difficult and hard to be cured. There is no sin more inexpugnable, than the sin of Infidelity.

1. The long continuance in our Nature makes it hardly curable: like a Tree deeply rooted, 'tis hardly digged up. The possessed of a Devil, that had been so of a Child, was hardly cured, *Mark ix. 21*. the Disciples could not do it, *This kind goes not out, but by Prayer and Fasting*. Infidelity, 'tis a tough corruption, 'tis a sturdy Devil.

2. Infidelity is hardly cured; 'tis a Disease of the Understanding and rational Soul. *Infidelitas est affectus in ipsa voluntatis & rationis arce sedens, & regnans*, Luth. And rational Diseases are most incurable. 'Tis a difficult work to take off a Film from the eye. And unbelief, 'tis a Film upon the Understanding. Unbelief, 'tis hardly removed, because it seems to be reasonable. Those sins that reason condemns, as Intemperance and Sensuality, Reason helps forward the cure of them; as Reason helps the cure of some Diseases: but reason pleads for Infidelity. Nature helps not this cure, but strives against it. What, will you put out our eyes? bid us believe we know not what? make us go further than Reason teaches us? See the difficulty of this cure in these discoveries.

1. Christ himself by his own Preaching could hardly master this blind and deaf Devil. Though *he spake as never man spake*, yet how few believed him? Not any of the great Ones submitted to him: nay, they gloried in it, *Do any of the Rulers believe on him?* Joh. vii. 48. No, not his own Country or Kinsfolk: *His Brethren believed not in him*, Joh. vii. 5.

2. Infidelity rejected not only his bare preaching; but it did out-face the very evidence and power of Miracles. 'Tis a sin not to believe even without

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Miracles. Christ reproves it, *Joh. iv.* But Infidelity will not yield, when it sees Miracles. How many Miracles did Christ cast away upon the Infidelity of the Jews? Thus God expostulates with the *Israelites*, *Numb. xiv. 11.* *How long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs that I have shewed amongst them?* Nay, the Jews Infidelity grew more obstinate by our Saviour's Miracles; it stiffned it self harder, kicked against the evidence and glory of them.

3. See the hardness of this cure of Infidelity, how weakly it goes forward in God's own Children, how slowly, how imperfectly? What ado was it to get *Moses* to believe at God's appearance to him? How did *Moses* and *Aaron* stagger thorow Unbelief? What a struggling of Unbelief in *Sarah* and *Zachary*? How often were the Disciples checked for their Unbelief? *O ye of little Faith!* And when they had believed, yet how soon were they relapsed and fallen back from it? *Martha*, after much ado, she believed: but, when Christ bids them open the Sepulchre, she relapses presently, she falls into a new fit of Infidelity; *O, now she stinketh!* What faith Christ to her? *Did I not say, if thou wouldest believe?* *Joh. xi. 40.* So the Disciples, after they had seen the Miracles of the Loaves; yet 'tis said, *They forgot that Miracle, for their hearts were hardened,* *Mark vi. 52.* What a swoon did the Faith of the Apostles fall into upon Christ's Passion? *Christ upbraided them for their unbelief,* *Mark xvi. 14.* 'Tis hardly cured.

III. Infidelity, 'tis a sin exceeding dangerous and pernicious, of great provocation.

1. 'Tis very dangerous. 'Tis seated in the most vital part, in the mind and understanding: And a wound in the head, 'tis much more dangerous, than in some other Members. Infidelity, 'tis *error circa Principia*: An Unbeliever errs in the first Principles, and so errs more perniciously; as he that mistakes and goes wrong at first setting out, and takes a wrong way, he errs more than he that mistakes afterwards, he goes not one step right. Belief sets us into the way to Heaven; but unbelief puts us the quite contrary way, carries us to *Tarbus*, when God sends us to *Nineveh*. He that that believes not, treads the first step wrong. Faith, 'tis the first beginning of a Christian life: *He that comes to God, must believe,* *Heb. xi. 6.* But Infidelity that sets us off: *Take heed there be not in you an heart of Unbelief, ye depart from the living God,* *Heb. iii. 12.* It stops our entrance into the Church: *They entered not through unbelief,* *Heb. iii. 19.*

2. 'Tis of greatest provocation. It offers an high contempt to the Glory of God. It calls his Truth and Goodness into question. God says it, and Unbelief gainsays it, and gives God the lye: *He that believes not, makes God a Liar,* *1 Joh. v. 10.* Faith acknowledges him *the Amen, the faithful and true witness*: Infidelity suspects his Truth, gives no credit to him. How severely hath God punished this sin? The Prince of *Samaria*, was trod under foot for it. It cost *Moses* and *Aaron* the loss of the Land of *Canaan*. How ill did God take it at King *Abaz* his hand, *will ye weary my God also?* saith *Isaiah*, *Chap. vii. 13.* It kept all the people of *Israel* out of the promised Land: *They entered not in, because of Unbelief,* *Heb. iii. 19.* They were guilty of many other sins; but this excluded them. It depopulated the Church of the *Jews*; their unbelief cast them out from being God's people. That Nation had many sins; above all, they murdered the Lord of Life, yet God offered them mercy, would have pardoned them that great sin, if they would have believed and embraced the Gospel: but, when they grew obstinate in unbelief, then God cast them away, *Rom. xi. 20.* *Because of unbelief they are broken off*: That sin made them Cast-aways. See how *Paul* serves the bill of Divorce upon that people, pronounces the sentence of utter dereliction upon them, *Acts xiii. 46.* *Seeing you put the word of God from you, and judge your selves unworthy of eternal life; lo! we turn to the Gentiles.* He leaves them to dye and perish in their sins.

We come,

Secondly, To the Cause increasing this Unproficiency; that's spiritual Blindness: *The God of this world hath blinded their minds.*

In it three things.

I. The Author that works this blindness, that's *the God of this world.*

II. The

II. The Advantage and Opportunity he hath to do it; that's implied in this word *ἔν αὐτοῖς*, 'tis his *being in them*. Serm. II.

III. The mischievous effect he works in them, he strikes them with *Blindness*.

I. The Author of this spiritual blindness is, *The God of this World*. Who is that? 'Tis an high Title; it sounds like one of the glorious Titles of Almighty God: *He is the God of the whole earth*, Isai. liv. 5. *The World is the LORD's and the fulness thereof*. He first made it, he still supports it by the word of his Power, he orders and governs it, and will one day judge it. This made *Chrysostom* conceive, it was the true God that is here meant.

Others take occasion by this Title fondly to imagine a double God. *Marcion*, he dreamed of two Gods: the one, the God of the Old Testament, him he term'd a *just God*; then he imagin'd another God of the New Testament, him he called the *good God*. A good God, and a just God; whereas Justice and Goodness are both in our God. Then, he would have the *Old God* and the *New God*; wicked and blasphemous contradictions! Newness and Oldness are utterly repugnant to our eternal God. *Novus Deus non fuit, vetus Deus non est*. No, he is always the same, *Yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever*. The *Manichees*, they ran wider, they would have a *good God*, and a *bad God*: both cursed Heresies, buried in Hell, we will not taint the air with further naming of them.

The true intendment of the Apostle is, to express and point out the Devil, that great seducer, that great opposer and adversary of the Gospel; 'tis he that blinds men, and hurries them to Perdition. He is called *The God of this world*: So our Saviour stiles him, *The Prince of this world*, John xii. 31. Saint Paul calls the Devils, 1 Cor. ii. 6. *The Princes of this world*; and Ephes. vi. 12. *κατακράτορας*, *The Rulers of the darkness of this world*.

So then, we must make these two enquiries.

1. What is his Dominion?

2. What is his Deity?

I. What is his Dominion? 'Tis *This World*. Here is one word seems to enlarge his dominion, *The World*; a word of wide compass: but here is another word that confines it, 'tis *This world*; that's *terminus diminuens*, a word of confinement and limitation. It spoils his Divinity to limit him. Ye mar a God, if ye come to confine him. What poor Deities had the *Syrians*? they were *Gods of the Valleys*, forsooth! and not of the *Mountains*. Put their Gods into the *Valleys*, and they would do, I, marry, would they; but set them on the *Mountains*, they could do nothing. A wicked man's God, is but the *God of this world*; both for extension and duration. But our God, he is the *Lord of Heaven and Earth*, there is the extension; and *his dominion is from everlasting to everlasting*, there is the duration of his dominion. Satan's petty Godship is limited to *this world*, he may rustle it here a while, but he bears no sway in the world to come. *Heaven is my Throne*, saith God, and *the Earth is my foot-stool*. *Thronus Diaboli is scabellus Dei*. *The World*, the *Devil's Throne*, is but *God's foot-stool*. Our God in Heaven is all in all.

How then is Satan *the God of this World*? *The World* hath a double acception: it signifies only the *Territory and Region*, or else the *Inhabitants and People* of it; that is, either the *things of this world*, or the *men of this world*.

(1.) Take it for the *Territory*, and then I demand, *Is Satan indeed the God of this World*? Surely, *The world is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*. This frame of Heaven, and Earth, and all the Creatures in it, and parts of it, own no other God, but the only, true, living God. Satan hath no true original power over the least pile of grafs, or dust of earth; he could not, when time was, and when it much concerned him, make *ex pulvisculo pediculum*, Exod. viii. not turn one grain of dust into the least poor, crawling Creature. Yet something there is that he bears the sway, carries the name of *the God of this world*. He is so,

1. By Usurpation; like an audacious Traitor, that sets himself up against his lawful Sovereign, and will settle and order the Kingdom without him. But this

Serm. II. this Title will prove too hot for him : He must claim it by another, such as it is, and that is,

2. By God's permission. He suffers Satan to play the God here, and to exercise a kind of power in this material world. God yields him the intermeddling with the Creatures ;

[1.] *Ut sint arma militiæ.* Gives him these advantages to strengthen himself, that Christ's victory over him may be the more glorious : as *Jehu* said to the men of *Jezreel*, *Now you have a strong City, fight for your selves*

[2.] *Ut spolia victoriæ.* God permits him to domineer in these Creatures, as having got a kind of right over them by our overthrow. So far as we had right in them, so far Satan won them by subduing us.

[3.] *Ut vincula captivitatis.* He suffers Satan to domineer in these outward things, that they may be as bonds and fetters to hold his Captives. The riches, and honours, and wealth of the world, are oft-times Satan's fetters, in which he keeps his Prisoners and Vassals. But yet this power is still under control, and liable to ejection. That's the Territory,

(2.) Take the World for the Inhabitants. *St. Peter* (2 Epist. Chap. ii. 5. calls it *The world of the ungodly.* In that sense especially Satan is *the God of this World.* Wicked men are called *the World* ;

1. There is a World of them. A few good, very few in respect of the bad, they fill and people the World.

2. They are called the *World*, that's their proper element. *David* calls them *The men of this World, whose portion is in this life.* The Saints, they are but strangers ; they are *incolæ*, the other but *advenæ*. Saints are Pilgrims, the other *αὐτοχθόνες*, home-born to the world.

3. They are the *World*, they bear all the sway. The world was made for them, as the Sea for *Leviathan*, and they take their pastime therein. God's People beg only, as the *Israelites* did, *Let us go by the King's high-way into our own Country.*

This is the *World* where Satan Lords it. That *World* which *St. Paul* calls, *This present evil world*, Gal. vi. 4. That which *St. John* speaks of, *The whole world lies in wickedness*, 1 Joh. v. 19. That *World* against which Christ denounces a *Wo, Wo* to the world, because of offences, Mat. xviii. 7. That world which stands in enmity against God, *The friendship of the world is enmity against God*, Jam. iv. 4. That which Christ prays not for, *I pray not for the world*, Joh. xvii. 2. That world which cannot see Christ, nor receive him, *Joh. xiv. 17.* That world is Satan's dominion. That's the first Enquiry.

2. The second Enquiry is, What is Satan's Deity ? How comes Satan to this greatness, to be *the God of this world* ? I answer, he attains to the God-ship three ways.

(1.) By necessary devolution. If the Lord be not our God, then Satan will be. The World is divided into two Bodies, and there are two Heads of these two Bodies ; there are no Neutrals, that belong to neither.

1. The body of the Saints, the Church. Of that Christ is Head.

2. The body of the wicked and ungodly ; Satan is the Head, they are his limbs and members. They that belong not unto Christ, they are Satan's portion. These are the two Cities *St. Augustine* so much discourses of in his Book *De Civitate ; Jerusalem* and *Babylon* ; and all men are Citizens to one of these. The *New Jerusalem*, that's the *City of God* ; *Spiritual Babylon*, the Burrough and incorporation of Satan. All, that are without the Borders of *Jerusalem*, belong to *Babylon*. *Intra Ecclesiam Christus, extra Ecclesiam Diabolus*, Cypr. When *Paul* cast out wicked men out of the Church, he delivered them to Satan.

(2.) Satan becomes the God of wicked men, by their real and voluntary submission to him, as to their God. Indeed all wicked men do not in open and exprefs manner devote themselves to Satan (that's the high Apostasie of some Monsters) but yet in true construction, in real account, every wicked man makes Satan his God, and himself his Servant. As he that chuses to live in any King's Dominion, under his Laws, performs Obedience, is to all purposes and constructions of Law such a King's Subject, though he doth not perform actually any personal homage,

or

or swear Fealty to him: So wicked men live in Satan's Territory, submit to all the Laws of his Kingdom, fulfil those things which he accounts honour and worship to him. His will sways them, his Vice-gerents, the world, and the flesh, and the lusts of them, take up their hearts. If we obey Satan's Ministers, we honour him. Many a man stands more in awe of the next Constable, than he doth of the King; but, by doing so, he approves himself the King's Subject.

Serm. II.

(3.) Satan becomes the God of wicked men by God's just desertion, and giving them over, and so Satan becomes a God to them. Obstinate sinners, God gives them over to Satan, he sets Satan over them to rule, and to be effectual in them. The patience of God, and his expectation, by which he waits upon the hardness of our hearts, hath its date and period. When that is come, and yet we will not turn to him nor submit, he then withdraws himself, leaves us to the power and malice of Satan, and he becomes a God to rule and govern us. 'Twas the heavy curse and imprecation of *David* upon obstinate, wicked men, *Let Satan stand at his right hand*, Psal. cix.6. Thus he gave over *Pharaoh*, and *Ahab*, and *Saul*, and *Judas*, to the power of Satan. He enters in *jus vacui*, he claims us then by way of occupancy. When men are cast off by God as forlorn and hopeless, all means have been used and prove unsuccessful; then that man is made a Prey to Satan. He that will not serve the true God, shall be a Vassal to Satan. They are driven out of the inheritance of the Lord, to serve the basest of all false Gods, the Devil himself. *Sach men*, saith *St. Paul*, turn aside after Satan.

It shews us the great calamity that we bring upon our selves, by departing away from the living God. It puts us into the lowest, vilest slavery that can be, lets Satan as a God over us. Many base subjections a wicked man makes to Satan, and Satan gets many Titles of Superiority over him.

[1.] Wicked men make Satan their Master, and themselves his Drudges; and that's a base subjection, worse than that of *Cham*, or *Canaan*, a servant of servants shall be. *St. Paul* assures of this, *His servants you are to whom ye obey*, Rom. vi. 16. The life of a wicked man is a constant drudgery and service of Satan. That's a base condition.

[2.] Wicked men have a nearer relation, Satan gets greater interest in them; they make themselves his Children; Satan becomes a Father to them. And though it seems otherwise, 'tis worse to be a Child, than a servant to Satan. They are more naturalized to him, of nearer similitude. *Moses* had rather be a Bond-slave to *Pharaoh*, than a Grand-Child to him; rather suffer affliction under him, than enjoy pleasures with him. And what are Sinners to Satan? *St. John* tells them, *They are Children of the Devil*, 1 Joh. iii. 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil*. Thus *Christ* tells the *Jews*, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and his lusts do you*, Joh. viii. 44. A fearful thing to be reckoned Satan's Off-spring, the seed of that Serpent, the Generation of the Viper.

[3.] The Devil gets an higher and more supreme Dominion over them, he becomes their King and Sovereign. He is called *the Prince of this world*, Joh. xiv. 30. So *Rev. 2.9.* we read of *Satan's Throne*. Our Saviour tells us of *Satan's Kingdom*, Mat. xii. 26. A great Power, an heavy Yoke, an unsupportable Tyranny. The Dragon and his Angels, able to wage war with *Michael* and his Angels.

[4.] But of all submissions and subjections, this is the vilest and basest, to set up the Devil to be our God; not only to give him the service due to a Master, nor the obedience of a Son unto a Father, or the subjection due to a King; but to stoop to him, as to the God-head, which we worship and adore. What's this, but to give the cursedest Creature the highest honour? 'Twere Treason to depose the King, though to crown his Son; but to set the Crown upon the vilest Traytors head, and make him our King, 'twere double Treason. Yet thus deal we with God, vile Wretches that we are. In our daily Rebellions we disclaim our Homage to his sovereign Deity, and devote our selves to the service of a Dung-hill God.

It shews us *in signem contumeliam*, the high contempt and indignity that God suffers from the men of this world. A wicked man as much as in him lies, puts God out of his Throne, and places Satan in it. Indeed they cannot do it, *The Lord is God*,

Serm. II. God, be the People never so rebellious: but that excuses not the World's wickedness. As St. *Augustine* speaking of lusting after a Woman, *Et illa casta est, & tu adulter es*; she continues chaste, and yet thou hast committed adultery with her in thy heart. And so of him that hates his Brother, *Ille vivit, & tu homicida es*; he is alive, and yet in thy heart thou art a murderer. So the Lord is God in spite of all impiety; yet the world, as much as lies in them, do unthrone and un-God him. They revolt from God to his utter Enemy, and worship the basest Creature, before the Creator. You know with what indignation and detestation *Paul* speaks, *1 Cor. vi. 15.* What? shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an Harlot? How much more dishonour is it to take the members of Christ, and to make it a member and limb of Satan?

True; but who sets up Satan as a God to worship him?

1. I answer; Some Nations expressly do it, actually adore him, and sacrifice to him. No doubt, a singular calamity it is, that the soul of man, made to serve and enjoy God, should be so grossly besotted, so wofully enthralled, as to exhibit that sacred service of Divine worship to that cursed Fiend. *Dii Gentium Dæmonia*, *Psal. xcvi. 5.*

2. All false and Idolatrous worship (though it be otherwise meant) is, in God's account, the worship of Satan. The Jews pretended they imitated *Abraham* in sacrificing their Sons; but what saith God of it? *They offered up their Sons and Daughters unto Devils*, *Psal. cvi. 37.* Thus the Scripture reckons of all the superstitions and false worships amongst the Heathens, *1 Cor. x. 20.* I say, saith St. *Paul*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God; though they thought not so. Nay *Jeroboam's* service was intended to the true God *JEHOVAH*; it was but Error in modo: *Amos* calls it the manner or way of *Beersheba*; that was all, and yet God accounted that worship as done to Devils. *Jeroboam ordained Priests for High-places, and for the Devils*, *2 Chron. ii. 15.* The Christians in *Corinth* thought they might eat of Heathens sacrifices, they could distinguish betwixt the Meat and the God: Oh! no saith *Paul*, I would not that ye should have fellowship with Devils, *1 Cor. x. 20.* A false Religion, 'tis the Devils invention, and he that performs it, performs to the Devil an act of Adoration.

3. Not only Invocation and Adoration, but every wicked and impious action is a real performance of worship to Satan; as a Christian honours God and serves him, not only by the immediate acts of Religion, but by fulfilling of his will, by doing of that which is well-pleasing in his sight. There are acts of Religion, and effects of Religion: Acts of Religion, as Prayer, Invocation: Effects of Religion, as to visit the Widows and the Fatherless, *James i. 27.* both are protestations of honour and worship to God. Thou servest God in doing of any good deed. Why so?

1. Because God hath instituted it, 'tis an act of his appointment and ordination.

2. Because he accepts it at thy hands, and delights in it.

3. Because his Spirit moves thee to it.

4. Because his Glory is set out by it, his Kingdom is advanced by it.

5. Because he will surely reward thee for it. In all these regards every good duty is a service done to God. So an ungodly man, in his wicked courses, performs a true, real worship and service to Satan, though he think not of it.

1. Because every wicked act is Satan's invention and ordination. St. *John* calls them all the works of the Devil: *For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil*, *1 Joh. iii. 8.*

2. They are his works, he is served by them, he takes great delight in them. *Non nidoribus pascitur, sed vitiiis*, saith St. *Augustine*: A wicked action is a sweet sacrifice in the Devil's nostrils.

3. His spirit stirs them up to it, he rules in them, *every*, he works effectually in the Children of disobedience. Satan fills their hearts with those sinful motions; as St. *Peter* speaks to *Ananias*, *Acts v. 3.* Why hath Satan filled your hearts? They obey his motions and suggestions.

4. His

4. His Kingdom goes forward by it, he gains by every wicked action. And *Ser. III.* this makes him insult over God himself, as *Chrysostom* notes, as having more servants and worshippers in the world, than God himself.

5. 'Tis his service, he will pay them their wages. A sorry, nay, an heavy reward it will be. But yet the Devils days-men they be, and he will recompense them.

Tantum de primo, the Author and Worker of this Blindness in Unbelievers, The God of this World.

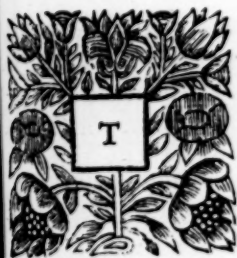


The Third

S E R M O N

On 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light——



THE Author of this Spiritual Blindness is the Devil, *The God of this world.*

II. A second thing considerable is the Advantage and Opportunity that Satan hath in wicked men and Unbelievers, to blind them; that's implied in this word, 'Evil', 'tis by being in them. 'Tis not so much *inter quos*, amongst whom; but *in quibus*, within whom.

'Tis a speech of very great Emphasis, and shews that Mastery and Power that Satan hath over the souls of Unbelievers. He is in them, as in his possession; the heart of a wicked man is the hold of Satan, the seat and resting place of that Evil spirit. Every ungodly man is a spiritual *Dæmoniack*; his soul 'tis the harbour and receptacle of Satan. As those that are sanctified, and believe, God's good Spirit dwells in them, fixes his mansion and abode in them; he makes the Soul of a Believer his Temple and Sanctuary: *We are built up for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 22. God dwells in the heart of an *humble man*, *Isai. lvii. 15*. So, on the contrary, every wicked man and Unbeliever, is the habitation of Satan: Such an one Christ calls *Satan's house*. *The unclean Spirit takes to him seven other Devils worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell in that man*, *Matth. xii. 45*. Our Saviour compares Satan, in the heart of a wicked man, to a *strong man armed that keeps his Palace in peace*, *Luke xi. 21*. He hath quiet possession, absolute command. Thus he took possession of *Judas his soul*, *Luke xxii. 3*. *Then entered Satan into Judas*.

Here is the difference 'twixt a Saint and a wicked Sinner. Satan is *Sanctorum acicola, impiorum incolo*: He is but a borderer on a Saint, but a dweller in a wicked man. He may busie himself about a good man, as an Assailant; but he hath the full possession of a wicked man, as an Inhabitant. *Missus est foras* (saith *St. Augustine*) *non intrinsecus dominatur, sed extrinsecus præliatur*: He is cast out of a Child of God, and so beleaguers him by outward assaults only, but hath no inward hold or possession of his heart. It may be, he may surprize the heart of a good Christian sometimes, steal in by some temptation; but he is in there like a Thief in a true man's house: but he is in the soul of a wicked man, like a Thief in his own harbour; the soul of such a man, 'tis a den of Thieves.

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Serm. III. He surprized *Peter* by temptation, but was presently cast out again: but he entred into *Judas*, and took possession of him. *Non modo adest, sed inest*, saith *St. Bernard*: he is not only a Neighbour, but an Owner of wicked men. As *Augustine* alluding to *Nathan's* Parable concerning *David's* Adultery, when he tells him of a Traveller that came to the rich man; "That Traveller, saith he, was that sinful temptation, *Libido in Davide non rex, sed Hospes fuit; nec in eo libidinis immoderata permanſio, sed transitus fuit*; that temptation it was a Traveller that turned in for a night, and departed again; it had no fixed dwelling, or abode with him. But a wicked man's heart, is not *hospitium*, but *regnum Satanæ*: Satan doth not only lodge in a wicked man's heart, as a Traveller for a night; but rules and reigns in him. He assaies to carry Saints to sin, but is not so prevalent with them, they resist and repel him; but in a wicked man, he is effectual in all his temptations. *Ἐνεργεῖ*; he works effectually in the children of disobedience, *Eph. ii. 2.* He is in them as another soul to enliven them. He is like sickness in a Saint; but like life in a Sinner.

This is the woful condition of an unconverted, unbelieving sinner, though 'tis little thought of. To have our house haunted with an evil spirit, we think it dismal; or a bodily possession by the Devil, 'tis counted a dreadful vexation: whereas neither the one, nor the other is to be compared with this woful misery of the Devils spiritual inhabitation. *Excutiamus hunc pulverem*, saith *Chrysostom*, comforting *Stagirus* that was haunted with the Devil by a bodily obsession; *We will soon brush off this dust*, saith he: He makes no more of that bodily affliction; but 'tis an harder matter to dislodge the Devil out of our hearts: a more sad condition to become to Satan a spiritual inhabitation. That's the second, the Advantage and Opportunity, *Ἐν οἷς*, *He is in them.*

III. We proceed to the third Particular, that's the mischievous effect which Satan works in them; he strikes them with *spiritual Blindness*, *Ἐτύφλωσι*, *He blinds the minds of Unbelievers*. That increases their Infidelity, makes them incapable of the Mysteries of the Gospel, they cannot see or behold the light of it. *St. John* assigns this for the cause why the *Jews* were so incredulous, that neither *Christ's* Sermons, nor his Wonders, neither his Oracles, nor his Ministers could work them to Conversion, *John xii. 37.* though he had done so many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him, 'tis strange, he wonders, as it is in *Isaiah's* words, *LORD, who hath believed our report?* Well, he gives the reason, *Ver. 38.* *Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah saith, He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts.* This Reason ceases the wonder: *Illud miror*, saith the Father, *vel potius non miror, non attendere homines cæcos*; 'tis no wonder that blind men cannot see.

Will you see the nature of this woful disposition, to be given over to blindness? There be many Considerations of it that make it woful, and those that are under it exceeding miserable.

1. 'Tis *malum spirituale*, a spiritual evil; and of all evils that can befall us, spiritual evils are most grievous. The Spirit of a man is the chiefest part of a man: And so those things that make for the good of the Spirit, are the chiefest good; and those evils that do affect and afflict the Spirit, are the greatest evils. Deformity of Body to a sober judgment looks nothing so evil, as a deformity in the Soul: Who would not rather have a mishapen Servant, than a false perfidious Servant? Diseases of the Body are outward and more curable: but distempers of the Soul are inward and dangerous. Bodily Blindness is a rueful spectacle: but to have the eye of the Soul darkened and blinded, is much more grievous.

2. 'Tis *in nobilissima parte spiritus*. Blindness in our minds, 'tis a woful blindness. Why? the mind, 'tis the highest and most supreme Faculty of the Soul of man; and *Corruptio optimi, pessima*. The decay of the chiefest Faculties, 'tis the worst corruption. Now the mind of man, 'tis his excellency, 'tis that by which he is likest God; that wherein he bears his similitude. By that he is nearest, and even equal to Angels; far above all other Creatures. To suffer in that, which is our Beauty

and excellency, 'tis the greatest suffering. As in Bodily Maims, to have a man's right Hand cut off, his Eye bored out, his Tongue the best Member that he hath, which David calls his *Glory*, to be rooted out; such maims are the most uncomfortable.

Nebuchadnezzar's loss of his Kingdom was not so great, as the loss of his understanding: to have his Reason taken from him, and to have the heart of a Beast given him; Oh! that was hideous. We account those Diseases most uncouth and uncomfortable, that take away or impair our understanding, as Lethargy and Phrensie. Who would not rather suffer the sharpest bodily disease, than a loss of his wits and understanding? As *Augustine* saith, *Who had not rather mourn and weep all his life time, and be in his wits; than to laugh all his life-time, and to be distracted;* He that loses his Reason and Understanding, is undone; the man is not himself. Such an evil is this Spiritual Blindness.

3. This Spiritual Blindness, 'tis a just Judgment that befalls Unbelievers, thus to be struck with this woful Blindness. 'Tis most just, and suitable, and proportionable to their sin. They will not understand, and therefore they shall not understand; they will not believe, and therefore they shall not believe. As the idle servant in the Gospel was justly and fitly punished; he would not stir hand or foot to do his Master service, how was he punished? *Take the slothful servant, bind him hand and foot.* He that would not stir, shall now be shackled and manacled, and not be able to stir, *Matth. xxii. 13.* They that rebel against the Light, cast them into utter darkness.

This is the proportion of God's rewarding and punishing. *Fidem fide ad augment.* Herewards our Faith, with encrease of Faith, and our good use of Grace, with more abundant Grace: But he punishes the neglect of Grace, with the loss of Grace. *To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but to him that hath not, shall be taken away even what he hath. Take away his Talent, and give it to another.* This reason Christ gives why he spake to the Jews in Parables, and would no longer preach plainly to them: *For whosoever hath, to him it shall be given; but whosoever hath not (that is, hath made no benefit of it) from him shall be taken even that which he hath. Therefore I speak to them in Parables: Because they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand,* *Matth. xiii. 13.* Now the plainest Sermons shall be Parables, Riddles, dark Speeches. Thus God punishes wilful Ignorance with woful blindness. As he doom'd and sentenced the barren Fig-tree; He looked for fruit and found none, he cursed it with barrenness, *Never fruit grow upon thee any more,* *Matth. xxi. 19.* and it withered presently: So when he sees us ignorant after all means, he curses us with Ignorance, never let Sermon do this man good. He blows out the Candle, when men will not work by it. As *Solomon* speaks, *Prov. xxx. 17. Oculus subsannans, The eye that mocks at his Father, and despises to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it.* When we come to have *Oculum subsannantem*, when the Eye of our Understanding, through unbelief, mocks at God, and despises his light, refuses to behold it, O! then the Night-Raven of Hell shall pick out that eye, and strike it with blindness.

4. This evil, 'tis the heaviest judgment that can be inflicted, thus to be given over to this Spirit of Blindness. St. *Augustine* by asking the Question, puts it out of Question; *Obscuratio cordis, excæcatio mentis, numquid parva pœna est?* What think you? *Is blindness of mind a light punishment?* Sure, saith he, none will say so, but he that is blind himself.

Oh! 'tis an heavy judgment; not to be able to see Christ and the means of Salvation, 'tis a certain sign of God's hatred; such a man bears the brand of God's heavy displeasure. Temporal punishments may be but chastisements, as *Augustine* saith, *aut excitant ad conversionem, aut exercent virtutem; sed occæcatio preparat ad damnationem:* But a blinded Mind, a dull and a deaf Ear, an hard, and impenitent, and unbelieving Heart, 'tis a testimony of God's heavy wrath and displeasure. Bodily Blindness is no such dismal sign, as Christ spake of him that was born blind, *John ix. 3. Neither this man nor his Parents sinned;* 'twas not a curse and vengeance, but for other good ends. But seest thou a man struck with spiritual Blindness,

Serm. III. given over to a reprobate mind? thou mayest conclude, *This man hath sinned grievously*; it is that the wrath of God might be manifested on him.

Of all punishments those are the worst and most deadly, by which we are given over to sin more wickedly. When God either smites his Ministers with dumbness, that they shall no more call upon thee, *Let him alone*? or thee with deafness, that thou shalt not hear what is said unto thee: when there is either *velamen in Mose*, or *velamen in corde*; when the word becomes dark, or we become blind: O! this judgment is of all others the most heavy. Thus St. Paul describes this judgment, *2 Thess. ii. 10. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, therefore God sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a Lye; that they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* 'Tis a bitter Sentence, *Rev. xii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still*; and so he that is ignorant, let him be ignorant still; or, when God gives a man over to spiritual drunkenness, as *Jeremy speaks, Chap. xxv. 27. Drink, and be drunk, and spue, and fall, and rise no more.*

5. Spiritual Blindness, 'tis a great evil, 'tis *inductivum aliorum*; it lays us open to all other evils. A man struck with this blindness, is subject and prone to fall into the grossest Errors, strong Delusions, unreasonable Apprehensions. Even those Truths that they know, shall vanish away. *Cum facies veritatis contemnitur, ne terga ejus postea videntur*, saith Gregory. They that would not behold the face of Truth, they shall not see so much as the back-parts of it. *Even what they know naturally, as bruit Beasts, in those things they shall deceive themselves*, Jude 10.

What monstrous Errors did the Heathen, and some unbelieving Christians fall into? Such a blind man how easily is he misled now? how readily doth he fall into the vilest sins? *If any man walk in the dark, he stumbles, because there is no light in him*, Joh. xi. 10. he sticks not at any wickedness. A blind man swallows any thing: He that sees may escape Satan's temptations: as *Solomon speaks, Prov. i. 17. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any Bird*: but, let him blind us first, we are for net, or snare, or pit-fall, there is no escaping them: As the *Philistines* did with *Sampson*, first put out his eyes, then makesport with him, put him to grind.

O, Faith will teach us to discern and avoid even small sins; but Infidelity and Blindness of mind, will plunge us into any abominations: *Because they would not know God, they were given over to vile affections*, odious sins, *Rom. i. 28. Such are taken of Satan at his pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26.* They are his game and pastime.

We see the dangerous nature of this spiritual evil. How is it wrought in us? For understanding of this, we must know that this *Blindness of mind* is of divers sorts. The Eye of the body is subject to manifold Distempers, that hinder the sight: So is likewise the Eye of our Soul. We will reduce them all to a threefold Blindness.

(1.) Is *cæcitas Naturæ*. We are all naturally blind in our understandings, as to spiritual things. Eagle-eyed to the world, it may be, we are; but Mole-eyed to Heaven and Heavenly things. There is a Film of Ignorance over our minds by nature, which makes us unapprehensive of spiritual Truths. *The natural man perceives not the things that are of God*; they cannot enter into him.

(2.) There is *cæcitas voluntaria*, a willing, voluntary, affected blindness; when men close up their eyes, refuse to look out and behold the light of saving Truth. Such as *Isaiah* complains of, *Chap. xxvi. 30. They will not behold the Majesty of the Lord*: such as *Scalder* speaks of, *2 Pet. iii. 5. Of this they are willingly ignorant*: such as *Solomon* complains of, *They love simplicity, hate knowledge, refuse correction, set at naught God's counsel, will none of his instruction*, *Prov. i.* Who so blind, as he that will not see? Such as *Job* describes, *Chap. xx. 14. They say to God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* This is that positive Infidelity, that Divines speak of; the sin of men living in the Church, where the Gospel is tendred to them, and salvation clearly propounded, and yet they refuse it.

(3.) There is *cæcitas inflictæ*, an inflicted blindness; when men are struck blind. And this follows upon the former. Voluntary blindness brings penal blindness: Because we will not see, therefore we shall not see. And this is sometimes ascribed

ascribed to God, and reckoned amongst his just Judgments; *Therefore they could not believe, because, Isaiah saith, he hath blinded their eyes*, Joh. xii. 39. This blindness, as 'tis a sin, God hath no hand in it; but, as it is a just punishment of sin, so God hath to do in it. He sends and orders all kinds of punishments. The culpable nature of it, as it is a malignity, comes from our selves, and from Satan: but the miserable effects of it, as it is penal, so God disposes of it. For this spiritual blindness is, as *Augustine* observes, both *peccatum*, and *pœna peccati*, & *causa peccati*.

[1.] 'Tis a sin, by which we refuse the Gospel.

[2.] 'Tis a punishment of sin; *quâ cor infidele dignâ animadversione punitur*.

[3.] 'Tis *causa peccati*, *cùm malum cœci cordis errore committitur*. 'Tis a Monster with three fearful Heads. Now the sinfulness of it belongs to us and Satan; God only orders the penal respect of it. But yet, neither doth he actually and really blind mens eyes, or harden mens hearts. God begets not, nor infuses any such wicked disposition in us.

How then doth God blind mens eyes?

1. He is said to blind men, *non illuminando*, because he doth not enlighten them: Not, that he makes them blind; but he leaves them blind, and doth not enlighten them. When he hath offered them the means of enlightening them, and they refuse them; then God resolves never to cure them, but seals them up in blindness. In the Gospel he offers them his sight, *Wilt thou receive thy sight?* Revel. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to anoint thee with eye-salve, that thou mayest see*. But upon our refusal, he at last forsakes us. Thus *Moses* expresses it, *Deut. xxix. 4. The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day*. Thus God blinds men, *non impertiendo malitiam, sed non impertiendo gratiam*, Aug.

2. What is said to blind men, *tollendo lucem*, by depriving them of that light which he afforded them, and they abused. *Iusto judicio peccatorum cor obnubilat, quia non receperunt dilectionem veritatis*, saith *Gregory*. When we neglect the light, or abuse it, 'tis just with God to remove it and take it from us. God oftentimes enlightens many a man, gives him some insight into Religion; so that he understands many Truths in the Gospel. Ye shall see some skilful in the Scriptures, and yet live in some wicked course, and *with-hold the truth in unrighteousness*: God quenches such a man's knowledge, dries up his gifts, suffers him to fall into error. That light which he had, is taken from him; the light that is in him becomes darkness.

3. God is said to blind men, *Occasiones ministrando*. God doth not effectually blind men; but by an holy and wise administration of occasion, which wicked men abuse to their own further blindness. As meat is ordained to preserve life; but yet it proves the occasion of many a man's death. Thus the Miracles in *Egypt* were in their nature means of Faith and Conversion; but they proved to *Pharaoh* occasions of blindness and further hardness. Thus *David* describes the way of God's dealings, *Let their Table be made a snare to them, and let the things which should have been for their wealth, prove to them an occasion of fall*. The light hurts sore eyes; so doth the Gospel occasion the blindness of perverse hearts.

4. God is said to blind men, *Tradendo seductoribus*; by forsaking them, and giving them over to *Deluders*, and *Impostors*, and *Spirits of Error*. Thus God gave over the unbelieving *Jews* to the seducements of their false Prophets. *Their Prophets became Fools, their spiritual men mad*, Hof. ix. 7. He threatens the *Jews* that would not be better'd by true Prophets, that he would send to them deceived Prophets, *Ezek. xiv*. So he gave over *Ahab* to *lying spirits*; *Saul* to an evil Spirit. Thus God may be said to blind men.

But yet the Text here ascribes it to the Devil: *Blindness of mind*, 'tis a work of Satan, he breeds it in men; both by his own malicious inclination, he delights to captivate men, and hold them in chains of darkness; he was by creation an *Angel of light*, but now he delights to be the *Prince of Darkness*; as also he doth by God's just permission and dispensation. He is *Iræ Divinæ Carnifex*, the Executioner of God's just vengeance upon the Children of unbelief.

Then

Serm. III.

Then the enquiry must be, how Satan works this spiritual blindness? *First*, He doth it not by any violent means. Satan cannot offer any violence to our Souls, he cannot break in upon us by any forcible entry, whether we will or no. Our Bodies may be liable to Satan's violence, but not our Spirits. Resistance of him, repulses him. He doth not like *Nebuchadnezzar*, that forcibly put out *Zedekias* eyes. This *blindness of mind* in wicked men, 'tis a sinful blindness, and every sin is in some degree voluntary. The Devil cannot make us sin, whether we will or no. Men, when they do not believe, they will not believe.

Secondly, Nor can he do it by any immediate action upon our souls, by any *intimate real working* upon our understandings. The soul of man is out of the reach of Satan, that he cannot extinguish the light that is in it, by any immediate action upon our Spirit. 'Tis a true resolution of *Bonaventure's*, *Inducit Diabolus, immutat Deus, nemo cogit*; the Devil may allure us, God only can effectually change us, but none can constrain us.

How is it then? 'Tis by some outward practices and insinuations, by which he gets into us cunningly, deceitfully, and so works this woful effect in us. And this he doth many ways.

I. He blinds mens minds by the efficacy of some false persuasions, by which he deludes them. And these persuasions they are either,

1. More prophane, and Atheistical, and Blasphemous, by which he bears some wretches in hand, that there is no such matter, as Preachers would make them believe: he tells them, that Religion is but a point of Policy to keep fools in awe; That Heaven is but a dream, Hell but a false fire, a meer imagination to affright men; all that they hear of God, and Christ, and the Gospel, the Devil persuades them, 'tis but a cunning Fable, invented to busie mens heads withal; and so they resolve all into plain Atheism. Where this persuasion takes place (as it doth with many) no marvel, though men close up their eyes at Religion, mock at all things that are told them out of God's Word, as a meer Fable.

2. He hath more moderate persuasions to blind common People withal; who, though they grant there is such a thing as a God, and Christ, and Religion; Yet,

1. He persuades most men, there is no such danger as these Preachers do talk of. Though they be not so Devout and Religious as they would have them: though not so strict of Conscience to abstain from every smaller matter; yet, a Grace of God they shall do well enough: Hell is made for the Devil, and Devillish men, and outrageous sinners; if they live fairly, and do as their neighbours do, and pay every man his own, they shall speed well enough, though they busie not their brains with these Quiddities of the Gospel. Thus Satan blinded *Eve*; he told her, She was too nice and scrupulous, and took God's word too strictly; she might please her self in eating the forbidden fruit, and yet do well enough for all that.

2. He persuades men, there is no such necessity of knowledge of the Gospel, as they would bear us in hand. A little knowledge, a small taste of it upon the point of a knife, 'tis enough; if we keep our Church in fair weather, and when we are at leisure, and say our Belief, when we think of it, 'tis as much as needs: let Scholars and Book-men study the Scriptures, 'tis their business; *Their lips must preserve knowledge*; for common People, a few good meanings will help them to Heaven. Satan conceals this, that Religion is a matter of common concernment, that we have all alike interest in God; all alike bound to believe in him: whereas St. *Jude* calls it *the common salvation*; and God tells us, that under the Gospel he looks for more knowledge, that *all should know him from the greatest to the least*, Jer. xxxi. 34. Divinity indeed is an Art for learned men, but Religion, 'tis the common Duty and Profession of all.

That's the first way, False persuasions.

II. Satan works this blindness in men by the Efficacy of Errors and deluding Superstitions. When he cannot keep our Religion out of the World, then he bewitches men with erroneous, and false, and superstitious Religions; and they are of an enchanting nature to hold men in Error, and keep them from the Truth.

Idolaters

Idolaters (the *Psalmist* faith) they are like Idols, *they have eyes but they see not.* *Serm. III.* Thus he besotted the *Heathen*, infatuated them with the dotage upon their false Gods, that they could not endure to hear of Christ, or the Gospel. So he turned the *Jewish* Religion into superstition. They were so wedded to their Law of Ceremonies, and their Temple so bewitch'd them, that they abhorred to hear of Christ or a new form of Religion. And thus he hoodwinks and blinds the common sort of Papists; O! the opinion of the Church, the Faith of their Fore-Fathers, it blinds their eyes, that they cannot endure to look upon the Gospel. These are called *strong delusions, making men to believe Lies.* That's a second means, Efficacy of Error.

III. Satan works this Blindness by the efficacy of divers Lusts that he breeds and nourishes in the hearts of men, and they steem up into the understanding, and over-cloud and darken it. 'Tis so as in bodily Blindness; oft-times some noxious Vapour from the Stomach will ascend and stop the Optick Nerves, and cause a Blindness: and 'tis so in spiritual Blindness; sensual Lusts have a power to darken and besot, and infatuate our Souls: *Whoredom, Wine, and New Wine, take away the heart,* Hof. iv. 11. The *Sodomites* were struck with blindness, and so bestial Affections breed brutish Cogitations; they will sit and dam up the Soul, leave no entrance for Grace or Religion; as a gross thick Mist will darken the Sun. 'Twas this that kept *Herod* from Religion; though he had some fancy to it, *John Baptist* could not prevail, and he set Christ at naught.

IV. 'Tis for some special purpose, that here Satan that is said to blind mens minds, is called *The God of this World.* It points us out the main Engine and Instrument, which he uses to work this mischief, and that's the *Love of this World* He knows full well, that the *Love of the World*, and the *Love of Religion*, can never stand together. If he can interpose the dark Body of the Earth 'twixt thee and the Gospel, he knows that will eclipse it, that thou canst not see the light and splendour of it. Satan takes the contrary way to Christ. *Spiritus Dei mentem, quam replet, illuminat; Spiritus autem Mundi excæcat,* Anselm. Christ cured a blind man by anointing his eyes with clay; that restored his sight to him: but Satan puts out our eyes with clay. The mire and muck of this World, 'tis of special use to the Devil to put out our eyes. Let him *set the World in our hearts,* as *Solomon* speaks, *Eccles. iii. 11. then no man shall find out the work of God.*

Other Lusts are Motes, but the Lust of the World, 'tis a Beam in the eye of the Soul. The Bribes of the World will blind the eyes of the wisest men. These Thorns will vex us in any part; but a Thorn in the eyes will make woful work there. *Balaam*, how clearly did God reveal his pleasure to him? He calls himself *the man whose eyes were open*, Numb. xxiv. 4. Yet how did Covetousness blind him? His As saw the Angel sooner than he could. The *Pharisees*, how clearly did Christ preach to them? and this sin blinded them. They laughed at all that Christ preached to them, *Luke xvi. 14. The Pharisees, which were covetous, heard all these things, and they laughed at him.* *Judas*, what means and opportunities had he to believe? always in Christ's company, daily hearing his Doctrine, beholding his Miracles, and yet the *Love of the World* closed up his eyes too, and he forsook and sold his Saviour. The rich man in the Gospel gave a fair account of himself touching other sins; but the *love of the World*, that set him off from Christ.

Satan hath more confidence to keep us off from Religion by this *love of the world* than any other lust. His persuasions drawn from this sin:

1. Are more cunning, than from any other Lust.

2. They are more commanding.

1. They are more cunning.

1. He will tell us, that the World and the Profits of it, are real and substantial; you may see it and enjoy it, full Baggs, and full Barns, I, there is substance in them: But, as for that, Religion and the Gospel tells us of, 'tis all but matter of Faith; and that's to a worldly man, but matter of conceit and imagination; I, but the World, and the Wealth of it, 'tis a sensible, real good. Wilt thou let go that, and look after Shadows, Dreams, Supposals, meer Imaginations? Such, faith Satan, is all that the Gospel propounds and promises.

2. He

Ser. III.

2. He will tell us, that the World, and the Wealth of it, is a present good; here it is, we are sure of it; and you may now presently enjoy it. What, wilt thou part with a present good, an actual fruition, for a matter of reversion and future expectation? All that the Gospel promises 'tis in another world. O, a worldly man laughs at that; give me present abundance, take Heaven hereafter they that will.

3. This sin is more perswasive; because it pleads with appearance of Reason. Satan will tell you, the soberest and wisest men drive after the World. They that condemn and condemn other Lusts, as sensual and brutish; yet the older and wiser they grow, the more they esteem the World. And is it not good getting that the wisest men hunt after? Those sins are most dangerous, likeliest to prevail, that have most of Reason, and least of Sensuality. Such is Covetousness. That's the Cunning of it.

2. *The God of this World* hath most confidence in this Lust of the World, thereby to blind us, and keep men off from Religion; because 'tis a most commanding Lust. It bears the greatest sway in a man's heart, more than any other Lust. The Devil makes the World his Vice-Roy. A worldly man makes the World his God. Covetousness 'tis Idolatry, *Coloss. iii. 5*. Now the having of the World for our God will bear us off from the true God, or his Religion. 'Tis hard to make a man give over his God. A man will sooner change his Friend or Companion, than part with his Religion, if he have any in him.

Now Covetousness is above all other sins called Idolatry, *Col. iii. 5*. St. Paul names other sins, *Fornication, Uncleanness, Evil Concupiscence*, but then adds, *Covetousness which is Idolatry*. Why? doth not every man make that which he loves most his God? 'Tis true; the Glutton makes his belly his God, *Phil. iii. 19*. Yet in a special manner Covetousness is Idolatry, so, as no other sin is.

Three things especially make a God.

(1.) Our Judgment; when we esteem it in our serious thoughts, to be our chiefest good, and that in which we place our happiness: so doth no other sin. It transports us with passion; but, in our sober thoughts, we judge it not our chief good. But a Covetous man saith in his heart, *The riches of the world is the fountain of happiness*.

(2.) Our Confidence; that's an Homage which makes a God. When we place all our trust in any thing, make it our Rock, our Fortrefs, our All-sufficient good; that's our God: so doth the worldly man only. He saith to the Wedge of Gold, *Thou art my confidence*; *Job xxi. 34*. *The rich man's wealth is his strong City*, *Prov. x. 15*. *He makes a mock at the counsel of the Poor, because he puts his trust in the LORD*.

(3.) Our service; that to which we devote all our pains and labour, in the most careful, strict manner; that's our God. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, *Mat. vi. 24*. No Christian is more attentive and watchful to wait upon God; than a Worldling is to attend upon *Mammon*. All his thoughts work that way.

Now then, if Satan can get this sin into our hearts, it will bear such sway in the Soul, that there can be no entrance for Christ or Religion. Such a man sees so much in the World, that he can see nothing in the Gospel. That dams up his Mind, darkens his Understanding. *Intus apparens prohibet alienum*: there is a God already in a worldly man's heart, he hath no place left to entertain Christ in.

We have done with the third Particular, the mischief Satan works in Unbelievers, by which he keeps them from Religion; he *blinds their minds*.

So then, are Unbelievers blinded by Satan? is this their condition? Of it let us make some use. Briefly from hence we may gather these three Corollaries.

I. Are Unbelievers blind by Nature, and blinded by Satan? *Tollit scandalum*; it removes the Scandal of the Gospel, that so few in comparison do yield to it and embrace it. It hath been true in all times, God's part hath been the smallest. Few, very few, that have been truly Religious. The *Pharisees* could object it against Christ; *Do any of the Rulers believe in him*? None but a few of the meaner sort. Here is a just Solution of this Objection. 'Tis no marvel so few embrace Religion; 'tis a marvel rather, that any do, that any should see the light of the Gospel; for most men are blinded by Satan, that they cannot see it. *Mirror*, saith St. *Augustine*.

sine, non attendere homines; vel potius non miror non videre cæcos. "Tis a wonder *Serm. III.*
 "that men should not give heed; but 'tis no wonder that blind men should not see,
 and give heed. 'Tis a rare thing to see a blind man recover his sight. What saith he in
 the Gospel? *Joh. ix. 32. Since the World began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes*
of one that was born blind. Such is our natural condition, born blind, and made blind
 too. Christ satisfies himself with this, *Mat. xi.* when he upbraided the Cities where
 he had preached, for their unbelief and impatience; at last he resolves all into this,
Ver. 25. These things are hidden from the wise of this world. This quieted St. Paul's
 mourning for the Jews unbelief, *Rom. xi. 7. Well, saith he, the Election hath obtained*
it, and the rest are blinded.

II. Are Unbelievers blind men? *Tollit præjudicium;* it slights the prejudice that
 such men have at Religion. Are Unbelievers, worldly men, blinded in matters of
 Religion? Then regard not their Judgment, esteem not their Opinion, be not trou-
 bled at their Censures, which they pass upon Religion. When we hear a prophane
 man censuring of Piety, despising or condemning the ways of God: alas! what is
 this, but to have blind men spend their opinion, and pass their judgment about co-
 lours, to find fault with the light of the Sun, which they never saw nor know what
 it means: Were it not a ridiculous thing to hear a blind man judge of Beauty or De-
 formity? As when one asked *Aristotle* what Beauty was? he tells him, 'twas *τυφλῶς*
ἰσχυρῶς, 'twas a blind man's Question. 'Tis as ridiculous to hear worldly men spend
 their opinion and pass their Censures in matters of Religion. *Every one judges of*
those things aright, in which he hath skill and insight, saith the Philosopher. Wicked
 men see no such excellency in Religion; no more doth a blind man see any glory in
 the Sun. The judgment of one poor Christian, that hath the eyes of his understand-
 ing enlightened by God, is more to be esteemed in point of Religion, than the whole
 world of Infidels. Thus Christ put off and slighted the censorious *Pharisees*, that were
 angered at his Doctrine, *Mat. xv. 12.* his Disciples tell him, *Knowest thou not, that the Pha-*
risees were offended after they heard this saying? Let them alone, they be blind Leaders of
the blind? they understand not what they censure, therefore regard them not.

III. Are men that believe not, no other than blind men? *Exigit misericordiam.* It
 should move us to pity them in their errors and mistakes in Religion. Every man
 looks upon a blind man with Pity and commiseration. To see a blind man fall into a
 Pit; who is so barbarous as not to compassionate his sad condition? How should we
 pity the fondness and blindness of men, that run themselves head-long into Perdition?
 It was hard-heartedness in the multitude that rebuked the two blind men, and bid
 them *hold their peace*, and not trouble our Saviour, *Mat. xx. 31.* Our Saviour was
 of another spirit, he had compassion on them: *He was a merciful High Priest, and had*
compassion on the ignorant, and of them that are out of the way, *Heb. v. 2.*

With what compassion doth St. *Augustine* speak to the *Manichees*, that were most
 gross Hereticks? *Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quantà difficultate sanetur oculus inte-*
rioris hominis, ut possit intueri Solem suum: "Let them be hard-hearted to you, that
 know not how hard it is to get the eye of the Soul enlightened to look up to God.
Illi in vos sæviant, qui nesciunt quantis gemitibus, & suspiriis fit, ut quantūcunque par-
te possit intelligi Deus: "Let them rage against you, that know not how many sighs
 and sobs it will cost us, ere we can attain to the true knowledge of God.

Blindness calls for compassion, not for insultation. Consider with what affection
 Christ looked upon ignorant unbelievers. When he saw a multitude of poor igno-
 rant People, like stray sheep without a Shepherd, *he had compassion on them,* *Mat. ix. 36.*
 See with what affection he looked upon obstinate unbelievers, *Mark iii. 5. He grieved*
for the hardness of their hearts. Nay with what affection did he look upon malicious
 Unbelievers, his bloody Persecutors? he pitied them, and prayed for them, as for
 blind men; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And so did his first
 Martyr *St. Stephen*; he prayed for his Persecutors. They stoned him, he
 sent up Prayers for them, and (it seems) more fervently than for himself. He
 stood on his Legs, when he prayed for himself: but he fell on his Knees, when he
 prayed for his Enemies; *LORD, Lay not this sin to their charge.*

The Fourth

S E R M O N

On 2. COR. IV. 3, 4.

In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light——

WE have seen the mischievous Effect that Satan works in the minds of Unbelievers. And, as the Effect is mischievous to strike them with *Blindness*, so his intent is malicious. 'Tis not to deprive them of some ordinary comfort; or, as the *Philistims* did with *Samson*, to make sport with them; or, as *Naash* the *Ammonite* would have done with the men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, bore out their eyes for disgrace and scorn to them, to lay it for a reproach upon all *Israel*, 1 Sam. xi. 2. But his aim in doing of it is deadly and desperate, 'tis to make them incapable of the means of Salvation, to make their perdition to be unavoidable: *He blinds their minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them.*

So then, here are three things that offer themselves to our consideration.

First, What is that, that Satan chiefly opposeth and setteth himself against? that's the Gospel.

Secondly, What is the Opposition he makes against it? What is the course he takes to hinder it, and to make it unsuccessful? 'tis by keeping the World in desperate Ignorance, obstinate Infidelity.

Thirdly, What is the End of this Opposition? *That the light of the Gospel should not shine into them, and they should be saved.*

The first thing considerable is, what that is, which Satan mainly opposes; that's the Gospel. Of all the ways and works of God, his greatest spight is against the Gospel; his greatest endeavour is to hinder the success of that, and to make it unfruitful. And the Apostle doth not barely name it, but with a magnificent and most honourable expression, he calls it *The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God.* And we may consider this expression of St. Paul in a threefold notion.

I. It sets forth a Description of the Gospel. Let the World and prophane men think what they please of it, and set it at naught; surely the Gospel is a magnificent thing, full of light, and glory, and excellency. That's the first Notion.

II. This expression of the Gospel, it gives a reason, sets out the motive why Satan doth thus malign and oppose it; *because 'tis the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God.*

III. This expression lays load and aggravation upon this sinful opposition, that Satan and Unbelievers make against the Gospel; it makes this sin appear out of measure sinful, to set themselves against so glorious a Gospel.

I. Let's take notice of it, as it is a Description of the Gospel. And here observe two things.

1. Paul calls it so.

2. The Gospel it is so; 'tis a *glorious Gospel.*

1. I say, Paul calls it so. He names it with this addition of excellency,

The

The Glorious Gospel. So he terms it in 1 Tim. i. 11. *The glorious Gospel of the blessed* Serm. IV.
 God. Why doth Paul add this Title and Epithete to it? Upon a double Reason.

(1.) 'Tis the expression of his affection that he bare to the Gospel. The honour, and dignity of the Gospel was dear to St. Paul, he could never say enough of it, never sufficiently admire the Gospel. As before his Conversion, he breathed out nothing but blasphemies against it; so now he breathes out nothing but praises and admirations of it.

There are three things that St. Paul never spake of almost, but with great ravishments of affections.

[1.] *Jesus Christ.* 'Tis observed, Paul still triumphs in that blessed Name. That Name was as *precious ointment poured forth*; 'twas a *bundle of Myrrh betwixt his breasts*; 'twas Musick in his Ear, as *Manna* to his Taste, he still sets himself to magnifie that name, and to make it glorious. St. Augustine reports of himself, that when he was scarcely in the state of conception, not attained to the New birth of a Christian, that the most eloquent Books were distastful to him, when he could not meet with the Name of *Jesus*; as *Tullie's Hortensius*.

[2.] A second thing which Paul mentions with much affection and delight, is *free Grace*. Oh the *grace of God*! Paul is evermore advancing that. He calls it the *riches of his grace*, Eph. i. 7. *the exceeding riches of his grace*, Eph. ii. 7. *the praise of the glory of his grace*, Eph. i. 6. Oh the *grace of Christ*! Paul felt the power of it, tasted the sweetness, and, as he had great cause, Paul highly extols it.

[3.] A third thing Paul speaks of with greatest affection, 'tis the *Gospel*. He still sets himself to magnifie that, and make it glorious. He tells us *the ministration of the Gospel, it exceeds in glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 9. And this St. Paul doth, both as a *Christian*, and as a *Minister*.

1. He magnifies the Gospel as a *Christian*, as one that hath felt the power of it in his own Conversion, reaped the fruit and benefit of it. What saith David? *I will never forget thy Testimonies; for with them thou hast quickened me*. Let others slight this Gospel, and set it at naught: That Soul that hath tasted the sweetness, enjoyed the mercy, felt the comforts, which the Gospel brings with it, cannot but break forth into admiration of it: That Soul will say, *Oh! 'Tis a blessed and glorious Gospel*. And as Paul doth it as a *Christian*; so likewise,

2. He magnifies this Gospel as a *Minister* and an *Apostle*, as one that is entrusted with this glorious Gospel. So the honour of the Gospel was precious to St. Paul; 'twas his care and zeal to take off all scandals from the Gospel, to gain credit and reputation to it, to invite others to the fellowship of the Gospel. St. John shews us the end of the Ministry, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen, declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us*. Well, wherein consists that fellowship? What is the dignity and excellency of it? Truly, saith he, *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. Surely that's a glorious Gospel, that gives us admittance to so glorious a condition. That's the first, 'tis Paul's Affection.

(2.) Paul calls it a *glorious Gospel*, in opposition to that contempt which they in Corinth put upon the Gospel. They slighted it, they saw no glory nor excellency in it. The more they despised it, the more Paul magnifies it. Let the Jews stumble at it, account it a scandalous thing: let the Gentiles spurn at it, esteem it a foolish thing, say what they will: The more St. Paul cries it up; Oh! 'tis the *Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*. As the Spouse in the *Canticles*, when others spake slightly of her Well-beloved, *What is thy Well-beloved above others, that thou so chargest us*? Cant. v. 9, 10. *Oh! my Well-beloved is the chiefest of ten thousands, he is altogether lovely; this is my Friend, this my Well-beloved, O Daughters of Jerusalem*. 'Twas David's zeal to the Law of God; *I will speak of thy Testimonies even before Kings, and will not be ashamed*. And Paul dares avow the glory of the Gospel even in the most eminent places of the World, and where there were those that would most despise it: Rom. i. 15. *I am ready to preach the Gospel at Rome: for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to Salvation*. Rome, it was the seat of the Empire, all the glory of the world shined at Rome, 'twas the Theatre of Glory,

Ser. IV. and all the Learning, and Wisdom of the world, it abounded at Rome: I, and the grossest Idolatries and Superstitions of this world, prevailed at Rome. What then? *I will boast of the Gospel of Christ, even there also.* Nay, Paul glories in that which was the greatest scorn and contempt of the Gospel, the Cross: That, amongst Heathen, was the main reproach of the Gospel. What? to believe in a crucified Saviour? Yes, Paul glories in that above all; *God forbid, I should glory in any thing, but in the Cross of Christ,* Gal. vi. 14.

That's the first, Paul calls it a *Glorious Gospel*. And as St. Paul calls it so: so,

2. The Gospel it is so, 'tis a *Glorious Gospel*. So then we have here a magnificent Description of the Blessed Gospel.

(1.) Here is the Quality of it; it is *Luminosum*, 'tis lightsome, of a shining nature.

(2.) Here is the degree of that Quality, and the Excellency of it; 'tis *Gloriosum*. *Gloria*, 'tis *flos lucis*, Light in its Excellency, 'tis full of Glorious Light, a *Glorious Gospel*.

(3.) Here is the Derivation of this excellency of the Gospel, from whence the Gospel hath all this glory. And here is a double derivation.

[1.] The first Derivation is more direct and immediate, that's from Christ; 'tis *the Gospel of Christ*. That makes it glorious, that Christ shines in it.

[2.] A second Derivation is mediate, and by reflection from God, in that Christ is the Image of God. Here is glory from the very Fountain of glory. All light comes from the Sun; all glory comes from the God of glory. The Gospel, that receives glory from Christ: Christ he receives honour and glory from the excellent glory of God the Father; as being the lively Image of his Father's Glory.

(1.) Here is the Quality; the Gospel, 'tis *Luminosum*, 'tis full of light. That's one degree of Dignity in the Gospel. 'Tis an excellency to be *vehiculum lucis*, Creatures the more lightsome they are, the more noble they are, and of greater dignity. Now what is Spiritual Light, but Truth? What's the shining forth of this Light, but the manifestation of Truth? So then, the Gospel is a shining Light, that is, it is the manifestation of saving Truth.

The better to conceive, that the Gospel is Light, we may understand it, as Light stands in a double opposition.

1. Light is opposite to Darknes.

2. Light is opposite to Dimness.

There are two things contrary to Light; *Tenebrae* and *Umbrae*, the Darknes of the Night, and the Dimness of the Twilight. In both these respects the Gospel is a *shining Light*.

The first of these, 'tis the Darknes of *Egypt*, that's the Darknes of Nature.

The second I call the Dimness of *Canaan*, the dimness and obscurity of *Moses* Law. In regard of both these, the Gospel is a Light. Corrupt Nature, that is the very mid-night of Darknes and Ignorance, that can make no discovery to us of the way to life. By Nature we lay under the blacknes of Darknes, compassed and overwhelmed with the shadow of Death. The *Jews* they were not in so sad a condition; the Law afforded them some glimmering of Light; they saw Christ dimly, shadowed forth to them by Types and Ceremonies: but the Gospel reveals him openly; *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. Here is the privilege of the Gospel, here is the benefit of Christianity, would we make use of it. We live in days of actual Light, saving Truth is unveiled and opened to us. If thou missest the way to Heaven, thou mayst accuse thine own Blindness, thou canst not plead the Gospel's Darknes.

That's the first quality of the Gospel, 'tis *Luminosum*.

(2.) Here is the excellency of this quality, 'tis *Glorious*. There is Light in a Beam of Light; but Glory, 'tis the Collection of all the Beams and Rayes of Light; as when the Sun shines forth in his full strength. Indeed Light, 'tis a most glorious Creature. Bodies, the more lightsome they are, the more glorious they are. And 'tis so with Truth, the more clearly it shines, the more fully 'tis manifested, 'tis the more glorious.

'Tis a preposterous way, to think to honour and magnifie Truth by conceal-
ing of it. Were it not so common, so much preached, it would be more reveren-
ced. Nay, verily, the more it is preached as it should be, the more the glory of
it appears; as the Sun is never so glorious, as when it shines forth in the midst
of Heaven. As, on the contrary, they secretly confess there is something con-
temptible in them, that must keep a distance, come seldom into view, to breed
reverence. True Worth, the more it appears the more it excels. Majesty, the more
it is seen, the more awful it is; the more I see my Sovereign, the more I honour
him. Those things that are but gilded over, their Lustre wears off with use;
but the Wedge of Gold, the more 'tis used, the more it shines. Obscurity and
Concealment dishonour Truth; they glorifie the Gospel, that do most clearly
publish it. 'Tis an honour to Truth, to be fully known.

So then the Gospel, 'tis a *glorious Gospel*. How so? Wherein doth the Glory
of the Gospel consist? I reduce it to two Heads.

1. The Doctrine of the Gospel, 'tis a *glorious Doctrine*.

2. The State of the Gospel is a *glorious State*.

1. The Doctrine of the Gospel, 'tis a *glorious Doctrine*; because in it the Glo-
ry of God is most conspicuous. And wherein God appears most, there is most
Glory. Glory is nothing but the shining forth of his Majesty. Now the Gos-
pel presents God to us as in his Royal Throne, clothed and compassed about
with Majesty and Glory. That glorious Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, that
we believe One God in Three Persons, we owe the clear manifestation of this
sacred Truth to the Gospel. We make but dark Collections of it out of the Old
Testament. And as that glorious Mystery of the Trinity, so that gracious Mys-
tery of Redemption, the Glory of it shines in the Gospel. And the Glory of
God, 'tis nothing so much seen in all other the Works of Creation and Provi-
dence, as in this one Mystery of the Gospel, the Work of our Redemption.
'Tis the Masterpiece of all God's Workmanship. In it is the concurrence of all
his glorious Attributes. His Wisdom, his Power, his Justice, his Godness, all
shine forth most gloriously in this Work of Redemption. Nay, not only the
concurrence of all his Attributes, but the concord and agreement of them, ap-
pears in the Gospel. There was a seeming repugnancy betwixt the Attributes
of God, touching Man's Salvation. His Justice, that called for our Punishment:
His Mercy, that interposed, and pleads for Pardon. How can these stand to-
gether? If he pardon us, what becomes of his Justice? If he punish us, where
is the Glory of his Mercy? Well the Gospel reconciles these. In Christ he hath
satisfied his Justice; and yet, withal, he hath magnified his Mercy: *Now Mer-
cy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other,*
Psal. lxxxv. 10. That's the first, the Doctrine of the Gospel is a *glorious Doctrine*.

2. The Gospel, 'tis a *glorious Gospel*, because the State of the Gospel is a *glori-
ous State*. The Christian Church under the Gospel is made exceeding glorious:
Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou City of God. 'Tis promised in the Old Te-
stament, but performed in the New. The Prophet *Haggai* tells us, *that Christ*
at his coming will fill his Church with glory. Glorious Privileges, glorious Ordina-
nces, glorious Endowments; with all these he hath enriched his Church. Our
calling to the Gospel, 'tis a glorious Calling. St. *Peter* tells us, *We are called to*
glory and virtue, 2 Pet. i. 3. The Spirit of the Gospel, 'tis termed a *Spirit of Glory*;
The Spirit of Glory, and of God, rests upon you, 1 Pet. iv. 14. The Hope which the
Gospel propounds to us, is a *glorious hope*; S. *Paul* calls it *the hope of glory,* Col. i. 27.
The State of the Gospel, 'tis so glorious, that the Prophet *Zachary* foretels, the
meanest Christian under the Gospel, shall be as glorious as the High Priest him-
self was under the Law. That sacred Inscription upon the High Priest's Forehead,
HOLINESS TO THE LORD, shall now be engraven upon every Christian.
The outmost Court of the Christian Church shall be as holy as the *Jews* inmost
Sanctuary. Indeed, where there is most Grace, there is most Glory. Grace,
'tis Glory begun in us: Glory, 'tis Grace finished and consummate. Were we
not wanting to our selves, and to the Grace of God, which the Gospel tenders

Ser. IV. to us, the weakest Christian might be as *David*; excel the state, out-grow the pitch of those in the Old Testament. *He that is least in the kingdom of Grace, might be greater than they.*

I proceed to the third Particular; and so,

(3.) Here is the Derivation of this Excellency of the Gospel; from whence it hath all its Glory.

A double Derivation,

[1.] Is that which is direct and immediate, that's from Christ. 'Tis the Gospel of Christ. That makes it glorious, that Christ shines in it. 'Tis the usual Style and Title of the Gospel; 2 *Theff.* i. 8. 'tis called *The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*. The Law of Moses, 'tis a Title of some Diminution: *The Gospel of Christ*, 'tis a Title of Honour.

And the Gospel, 'tis Christ's Gospel in a twofold respect.

1. *Subjective*; the Gospel, 'tis all concerning Christ. *Rom.* i. 13. St. Paul calls it *the Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*. That's one Ground of Dignity, from the Subject Matter of it. The Mystery of Christ, that great Mystery of Godliness, that's the Argument of the Gospel; *that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself*. All other Treasures of Knowledge, they are but Trifles to this great Wisdom. The Gospel teaches us to *know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge*, *Eph.* iii. 19.

The Gospel, 'tis Christ's Gospel,

2. *Efficienter*; he is the Author of it: and that's another Ground of Dignity. A glorious Author makes his Work glorious. Now then, whence comes the Gospel? Let St. Paul tell us, *Gal.* i. 11. *The Gospel, 'tis not of men, nor by men, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ*. 'Tis neither from men, of man's invention; nor yet by men, by man's discovery; but revealed by Christ. The Law was given by Moses, he was the Mediator in that Dispensation; but the Grace and Truth of the Gospel came by Jesus Christ, *John* i. 17. He is the Founder of our Religion; *He is the Apostle of our Profession*; *He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith*. He that is *in the bosom of the Father*; he that searches and discovers the deep things of God; his is the Gospel. Put these two together, Christ the Matter, and Christ the Author of the Gospel: he inspired it, and that reveals him. In both respects, the Gospel, without controversy, is a glorious Gospel. That's the first Derivation. The second Derivation of this Glory,

[2.] Is mediate, and by reflexion from the excellent Glory of God the Father. 'Tis the Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God. 'Tis a glorious Gospel, because in it Christ shines, who is the lively Image of the glorious God.

For better understanding this great Mystery, that Christ is the Image of God, we must conceive two things are implied in the Nature and Being of an Image. The

First is an Impression. The

Second is an Expression.

First, There must be a Stamp and Character of that whose Image it is, set upon the Image; that's the Impression.

Secondly, This Impression being made, then an Image hath another Condition, that's a fitness of Expression, to represent and make known the thing whose Image it bears.

In both respects, Christ is the Image of God.

First, Take him in his Divine Nature; so he bears upon him the Impression of God.

Secondly, Take him in his Offices, as he is our Incarnate Mediator; so he is the lively expression of God the Father, and of his Will and Pleasure. Take him in the first respect, so he doth perfectly exemplifie him. Take him in the second respect, in his Office of Mediator, so he doth perfectly notifie him, and fully declare him.

First, Let us with reverence behold and look upon the Divine Impression, which, as Christ is the Image of God, he receives from him. For better conceiving of this, we must know, that a perfect and exact Image imports four things:

First,

First, Similitudinem: There must be a Similitude and Likeness 'twixt the Image Ser. IV. and that whose Image it is. If there be no Likeness, there is no Image. Therefore God forbidding us to make any Image of him, *Isa. xl. 18.* gives this for a Reason, *To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?* It must be,

Secondly, Similitudo derivata: The Similitude of an Image must be by Derivation; it must be drawn and taken from him whose Image it is, by an intended Imitation. It must be,

Thirdly, Similitudo specialis: It must represent that whose Image it is, in its proper and particular Nature. It must not be in some common and general agreement only; as a Lion is like a Man in a common respect, as they are both living Creatures; but he is not like a Man in the proper Nature of Man, and so cannot be said to be his Image. If it be a perfect and exact Image, it must be,

Fourthly, Similitudo adaequata, a compleat Similitude. Not a likeness in some one part or respect only, and failing, and short, and defective in the rest; but it must be commensurate and fully equal to that whose Image it is.

Now, in all these respects to the full, Christ, and only Christ, as the second Person of the Trinity, is the Image of God the Father.

We are entering into the thick darkness, where God dwells. We will touch them briefly, remembering that of the Heathen Man, *Sanctius, & reverentius est, de Deo credere, quam scire.* These are the Matters of Belief, not of Dispute.

I. Christ is the Image of God; he bears his Similitude. Indeed in Substance they are both one. Likeness, or unlikeness, in that respect, were the wicked Imaginations of the blasphemous *Assyrians*. But as in Natural Substance they are both one, so in Personal Substance they are alike, there is place for Similitude. As the Son hath the like Lineaments that his Father hath, so hath the Son of God the like holy Excellencies with God the Father. He is the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.

II. Christ is the Image of God; he hath *similitudinem derivatam*. 'Tis not, as some casual Similitude 'twixt two Men, that have no reference or dependence one of another; but such a Likeness as is betwixt a Father and his own natural and genuine Son. As 'tis said of Adam, he begat a Son in his own likeness: God the Father, he is the Samplar; God the Son is the exemplification of his Father's Glory. The eternal Generation of the Second Person from the First, that's the Ground of this Derivation. He is therefore like him, because he is begotten of him.

III. Christ is the Image of God, not only in some general notion, but he is the Image of God in his most special and proper Being. Not only as God is a Substance, so the Son of God is a Substance; nor only as God is a Spirit, so his Son is a Spirit; but he is the Image of God, as he is God, the Holy and Divine Nature of the Godhead as communicated to him.

IV. Christ is the adequate, exact, and compleat Image of God. All the Excellencies and Perfections of God are entirely in Christ. And this makes Christ to be the transcendent Image of God, above all other Creatures. Man was made after the Image of God, but with much abatement of this high Perfection which is in Christ. Christ is the Image of God, as a Man's Son is the Natural Image of his Father, and hath all the substantial Perfections that his Father hath. But we are the Image of God, as some small Picture or Model may be said to be the Image of a Man; shortly, imperfectly, darkly. The correspondency and proportion 'twixt God and Christ is *ὡς ὅν*, not only Likeness, but Equality; but the correspondency 'twixt God and us, is but *ὡς εἰκόν*, some shadow of Similitude. *Christus, filius Altissimi, ac proinde Co-Altissimus*, saith Bernard. The Son of the most High, and so most high in the Glory of God the Father. There is a great odds 'twixt these two, to be made like God, as we were; and to be begot like God, as Christ is. 'Tis a true Maxim in Divinity, *Deus nec aequalem sibi condere potest creaturam, vel inaequalem gignere filium*; God cannot make a Creature equal, or beget a Son unequal to himself. All the Glory of God the Father, is communicated to his Son. *Gloria Patris, Filius sapiens*, saith Solomon, A wise Son is the Glory of his Father. Christ is the Wisdom of God, and the perfect Image of the Glory of God. Equality of Nature requires

Ser. IV. requires equality of Glory. *All men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 23.*

The Church-Story tells us, that the Emperour *Theodosius*, bearing somewhat too much with the *Arrian* Hereticks, that denied the Equality of Christ with God, and would not ascribe the same Honour to the Son, that they did to God the Father; an holy and learned Bishop coming into the Presence, where the Emperour and his Son and Heir were sitting, the Bishop did lowly Obeisance to the Emperour, but slighted his Son, and asked him, *How now, Boy!* without any more Reverence. The Emperour being angry to see his Son so slighted, the good Bishop answered him, *My Lord, O Emperour, you are much displeased that I honour not your Son; and is not God highly displeased, that you countenance those that honour not his Son?* It wrought upon the Emperour, and made him more severe against those wicked and blasphemous Hereticks.

That's the first Consideration of Christ's being God's Image, as an Image betokens an Impression, and so doth exemplifie.

Secondly, An Image serves for Expression, 'tis of use to notifie and make known that thing whose Image it is. As the former belonged to his Person, so this shews us the Office of Christ. As he is our Incarnate Mediatour, so he represents and acquaints us with God the Father, and makes him, and his Will and Pleasure known to us. What saith *John Baptist*, John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Cui veritas cognita sine Deo? Cui Deus sine Christo?* saith *Tertullian*: He that knows not God, knows not Truth; and he that knows not Christ, he knows not God. *In similitudine sua Deum quæramus; in imagine sua Creatorem agnoscamus*, saith *St. Augustine*. Wouldst thou acquaint thy self with God? Behold him shining in his Son Christ, as his living Image. Thus our Saviour directs *Philip* to the knowledge of God. *John xiv. 8. Philip* saith to Christ, *Lord, shew us the Father, and it suffices*: What saith Christ to him? *Philip, He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. Qui unum noverit, ambos noverit, propter omnimodam similitudinem*, *Aug.* They are both so like, that he that knows the Son, cannot be ignorant of the Father. He is the Image of his Person, the Brightness of his Glory, the Interpreter of his Counsel, the Angel of his Covenant, the Publisher of his Pleasure, the Mediator of his Gospel. But what saith *St. Paul*, *Eph. ii. 12. Without Christ, then strangers to the Covenant, having no hope, and without God in the world. Live without Christ, and live without God. Our Fellowship must be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Enjoy them both, or you have no part in either. There is no access to the Father, but by him.*

So then, from this Description of the Gospel, 'Tis the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God; briefly take notice of these two Corollaries.

First, Take notice of the Truth and Blessedness of our Christian Religion. See here how God appears in *Sion* in perfect Beauty. They talk of three Suns that have been seen in the Element; there are three glorious Suns in the Firmament of the Church:

First, Here is the Glory of the Father, shining like the Sun in its full strength.

Secondly, Here is the Son of God, the Image of his Father's Glory, deriving his Glory from the excellent Glory of God the Father.

Thirdly, Here is the Gospel of Christ, the lively Image and Representation of Christ. The Father he shines forth in his Son; the Son he shines forth in his glorious Gospel. Three glorious *παράλλοι*; no vanishing Meteors, but constantly abiding and shining in the Church. We may well say of the Church, what *Moses* said of *Israel*, *What People so great, that hath God so near to them?*

I. Take notice here of an happy way for us again to recover our lost Image of God, in which we were created, and which by our Fall was defaced in us. Here are three Helps of the renewing of it.

1. Here is *Facies*, the lively Face of God, whose Similitude we bore.
2. Here is *Imago*, the lively Image of that Face of God, shining in Christ.
3. Here is *Speculum Evangelii*, the Glass of the Gospel, whereby we may set our

our selves to the recovering of that blessed Similitude. Fix thy Meditation upon the Holiness of God; set before thine eyes that perfect Image of his Holiness, shining in Christ; be daily composing thy Soul at this Looking-glass of the Gospel, behold the Holiness it represents to thee. This Looking-glass of the Gospel, 'tis a rare Looking-glass. 'Tis not only for Representation, to shew us what we are; but it hath a virtue of Transfiguration. It not only shews Beauty, but conveys Beauty to us. See how St. Paul describes it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

That's the first, the Description.

Secondly, Let's take notice of the Reason of Satan's opposing; that's a second Notion. The Gospel, 'tis the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God: here is the ground of Satan's malice, that he bears to the Gospel, why he sets himself so much to deface it. The Gospel, 'tis the Glory of Christ; he is the Glory of his Father; and the Glory of God is that which above all other things the Devil hates.

A bloody Traytor intending to murder his Sovereign, and being a long time deterred by the horror of that Sin, began first to practise and embolden himself at the Picture of his Prince, that so at last he might venture upon the Fact it self. Satan's chief spite is at God himself; but he cannot reach him: but the Image of God, there where God's Glory shines most, that he maligns, and labours to deface. He hates every Creature, because in every Creature there is some appearances of God, *Similitudo vestigii*: but he hates Man more, in him there is *Similitudo imaginis*. But Christ and his Gospel are the lively Representations of God the Father's Glory; and therefore, of all others, he opposes them. "Surely, saith Tertullian, it must be some excellent thing, that Nero hated; the Gospel is a most glorious Image of God, and therefore the Devil doth so much malign it.

He is the Prince of Darkness, and delights in Darkness, is an Enemy to any Light; but his main spite is at the Light of the Gospel.

First, He can better endure the Light of Nature; that's but a dim Light, weak and imperfect; it cannot reach further than this lower Region; it cannot lead us higher, nor conduct us to Heaven. He can be content to suffer Men to live according to that Light. He will let them be civil and orderly Men for Humane Conversation. Many have been so, and yet proved Cast-aways. This part of the Image of God the Souls of Reprobates retain even in Hell. As the Papists talk of their Sacramental Characters, they are indelible, they cannot be worn out of the Souls of the Damned. *Hæc imago (saith Bernard) uritur, sed non consumitur*; this Image of God, Hell-fire cannot abolish it.

Secondly, There is another Light, that Satan can better endure; that's *Lumen Legis*, the Light of the Law. Sunder it from the Gospel, 'tis but a dead Letter. His opposing of that, 'tis like his Dispute about the dead Body of Moses: had he prevailed, he had gained no great matter by it. The Law, it may serve for Conviction, but not for Conversion. Nay, Satan accounts himself an Officer of the Law; 'tis the Writ by which he doth arrest the Conscience of a Sinner, and hales him before the Bar of God's Justice. *Lex operatur Iram*, Rom. iv. 15. *The Law worketh Wrath*. St. Paul calls it the Ministry of Condemnation, 2 Cor. iii. 9. that makes for Satan's Purposes. But the Gospel, and the Light of that, that's the matter of Satan's abhorrency; the malice of Satan is most against that. That is *Flagellum Diaboli*, the Devil's Tormentor. When he spies Christ in the Gospel, he cries out, *Oh! art thou come to torment me?*

That's the second Purpose of this Expression, *The Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God*; it shews the Motive, why Satan opposes it.

Thirdly, This Expression is purposed as an Aggravation of the great Sin of rejecting and opposing the Gospel. It puts upon this Sin a threefold Aggravation.

First, It makes it a most audacious, presumptuous Sin. Dost thou offer contempt to the Gospel? Thou offerest contempt to Christ, to God himself, who shine forth in the Gospel, and offer themselves to thee. The greatness of the Person

Serm. IV. Person aggravates the Contempt. *He that despises, despises not Man, but God,* 1 Thess. iv. 8. *Surely they will reverence my Son,* Matth. xxi. 37. They that spurn at it, will be found fighters against God, *Acts v. 39.* We cannot sever Christ from his Gospel. The Entertainment you give to it, he takes it as done to himself. *For my sake, and the Gospel's sake;* Christ makes it all one, *Mark 8. 35.* Men ignorant of the Gospel, are ignorant of Christ and of God. And what saith *Eli?* *If a man sin against God, who shall entreat for him?*

Secondly, It makes a Sin inexcusable. He that opposes the Gospel, sins against the Light, against a clear, glorious Light, that shines in the Gospel. Such cannot plead ignorance. The Gospel convinces clearly, shews the way of Life evidently. Ignorance for want of Means of Knowledge, is more excusable. But when God sets up a Light, and Men will not see it, or make use of it, but refuse, despise, oppose it; there is no Plea or Excuse for it. Thus *Paul* arraigns the *Jews* Infidelity, *Rom. x. 18.* *I demand, Have they not heard? Yes, verily.* That makes him conclude them to be a disobedient and gainsaying People, *Verf. 21.*

Thirdly, It makes it to be a malicious Sin, and of the greatest impiety. Why so? Because it opposes the Glory of God, that wherein God's Glory doth shine most clearly. Every Sin crosses the Will of God, and so, by consequence, dishonours him: but Contempt of the Gospel opposes the Glory of God. God is most tender of his Glory, he will not suffer that to be defaced. As he that should offer villany to the King's Picture, bewrays more malice, than he that breaks some of the King's Laws; so Injuries to the Gospel deface God's Glory, cross God's utmost End, which is *the praise of the glory of his grace.* God will not endure affront to his Glory.

Tantum de primo; What's that Satan opposes? 'Tis the Gospel. The next is, *Secondly,* What's the Opposition he makes against it? what's the Course he takes to hinder it? 'Tis by keeping the World in desperate Ignorance, and obstinate Infidelity.

Satan hath other Practices to hinder it; as,

- I. Falsifications of Truth by Heresies.
- II. False Imputations by Slanders and Infamy.
- III. Persecutions by Blood-shed, and all kind of Cruelty. But the main Engine is Infidelity.

1. All the rest serve only to fortifie this, and to strengthen his hold of Men by Infidelity. He sows Errours, raises Slanders, stirs up Persecutions, disturbs the Quiet and Peace of the Church; all to hinder Conversion, to keep men off from believing the Gospel.

2. Those other Practices of his may be over-ruled; the Church may get good by them; the Truth may be more cleared by them; Christians may be more confirmed by them: As the Experience of all Ages shews, that the Church hath gained by those other Oppositions; but Infidelity, that banes the Church, 'tis a deadly Mischief.

3. Infidelity is that he most aims at. He cares not so much, though the Profession of the Gospel have place in the World, and in mens Opinions; God gets nothing by that, nor doth Satan lose by it: so he may keep it out of mens Hearts. 'Tis Infidelity that excludes this Gospel from the Heart. He will let men talk of it, and profess it, so they will not believe it.

4. Those whom he cannot enrage to Persecution, yet such he can hold to himself by Infidelity; this Engine fetches them in. *Gamaliel* would be no Persecutor; yet Satan had enough to make him an Unbeliever. With this he catches moderate men, that cry out of Cruelty; Let men have Liberty, force not their Consciences, away with Persecutions: Yet such men there are, that will not believe or embrace the Gospel. That's the Opposition, Infidelity.

Thirdly, What's the End of Satan's Opposition? *Nè luceat Evangelium,* that the light of the Gospel of Christ should not shine unto them. Satan envies the World the Benefits of this blessed Light, which is shed abroad by the Gospel. What are they? Take these four:

I. This

I. This Light of the Gospel, 'tis *Lux vivificans*. Our Saviour calls it *the Light of Life*, John viii. 12. 'Tis a quickning and enlivening Light; as the Light of the Sun revives every Creature, and puts vigour into it. 'Tis the Voice of the Gospel to men *dead in trespasses and sins*; *Stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Ephes. v. 14. See how St. John describes our Saviour, John i. 4. *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*. Death and Darknes, Light and Life, they go together; Christ brings *Life and Immortality to light by his Gospel*. That makes Satan malign and oppole it. The Region of Death, that's the Territory of Satan. The Gospel rescues and recovers us out of that woful condition, and restores us to life. That makes him envy it.

II. This Light of the Gospel, 'tis *Lux detegens*; 'tis a discovering Light. It lays open all the Frauds and Impostures of Satan, by which he beguiles and circumvents us. Satan prevails more by Policy than by Power; Subtilties and Seductions are his ways to destroy us. But the Gospel that detects all his Cunning. Acquaint thy self with that, and *we shall not be ignorant of his devices*, as S. Paul speaks, 2 Cor. ii. 11. *Astutus est Diabolus; sed Christus Dei sapientia*: the Devil is crafty, but Christ and his Gospel is the Wisdom of God. That Wisdom detects his Impostures, and that makes him envy it.

III. This Light of the Gospel, 'tis *Lux dirigen*s; 'tis a Light to direct and guide our Feet in the ways of Peace. It makes our way to Heaven plain before us. Thus *Isaiah* describes the Gospel, Chap. xxxv. 8. *An high-way shall be there, and it shall be called, The way of Holiness; the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein*. And *Solomon* sets it forth, Prov. iv. 18. 19. *The path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day. But the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble*. St. *Augustine* notes it, alluding to *David's* Speech, *They have set Traps, juxta viam*, saith he, *not in via*. Satan watches for our wandrings out of the way; turn on either hand, and we are Booties to him. But the Gospel teaches us to make streight steps in our way. As *Solomon* saith, *The way of Life is above to the Wise, that we may depart from Hell beneath*: That makes him to envy it.

IV. This Light of the Gospel, 'tis *Lux exhilarans*; 'tis a refreshing, chearing, and comforting Light; and that Satan envies us. Light and Gladness, Darknes and Sadness, they go together. Now the Gospel ever brings Joy with it. As the Wise-men, when they saw the Star, they *rejoiced with exceeding great joy*. Still you see, where-ever the Gospel takes place, it brings Joy with it: they entertain it, as *Zachens* did Christ; *He received him joyfully*. The *Eunuch*, when he saw this Light, *he went away rejoicing*, Acts viii. 39. The dejected and despairing *Gauler*, as soon as he believed, *he rejoiced*, Acts xvi. 34. The City of *Samaria*, they extertained the Gospel, and there was *great joy in that City*, Acts viii. 8. All these were *μετανοήσαντες*, enlightned by Baptism, and forthwith rejoiced. This Joy and Comfort Satan repines at. He loves to have us rejoyce in Evil; or, if that will not be, pensive in Piety. In all these respects, Satan maligns the Light of the Gospel.

1. 'Tis an enlivening Light, recovers us out of the hold of Death, and so it despoils him.

2. 'Tis a detecting Light, and so it discovers him.

3. 'Tis a directing Light, and so it disappoints him.

4. 'Tis a chearing and comforting Light, and so it vexes him.

The Churches Comfort, is the Devil's Torment.

The End of the First Volume.
